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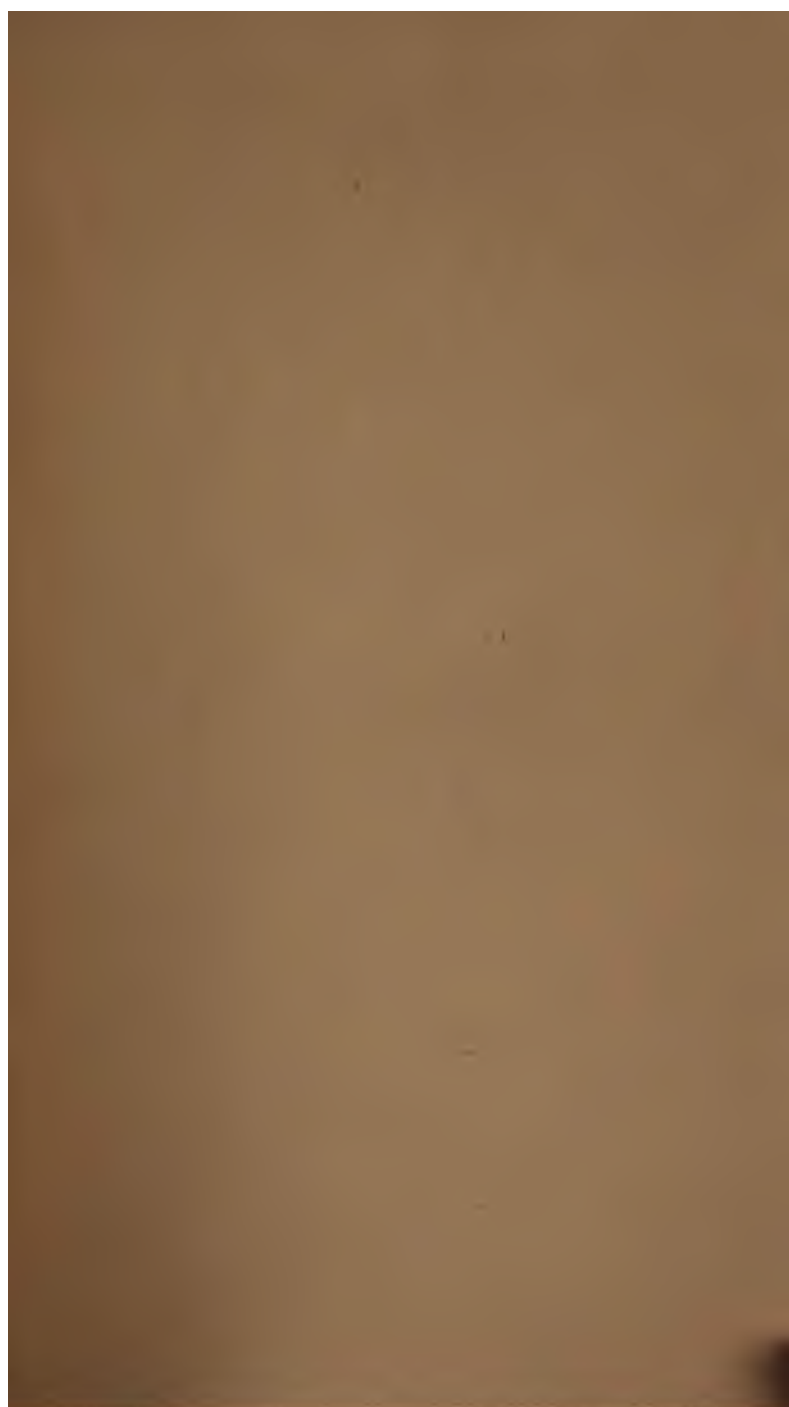
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ALICE ALLAN.

THE COUNTRY TOWN.

ET CET.



ALICE ALLAN.

THE COUNTRY TOWN.

ET CET.

BY ALEXANDER WILSON.

LONDON:

GEO. B. WHITTAKER, AVE-MARIA-LANE.

1825.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages, I have set down a few things that have passed within my own observation; and in doing so, it has been my aim to employ the sober language of truth, in order that I might best display the beauty of honor and virtue. Should my leisure permit, I purpose using the remainder of my notes in the composition of a second volume.

A. W.



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ALICE ALLAN.

B



ALICE ALLAN.

" Oh! fresh is the rose in the gay dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close :
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring ;
Enthroned in her ean he delivers his law ;
And still to her charms *she* alone is a stranger !
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a' . "—BURNS.

THE father of Alice was the Vicar of one of those quiet and beautiful villages, full of rare and secluded spots, which abound in the West of England. It did not boast, like the scenery in the North of the kingdom, of so much of romantic hill and valley ; but it was not wholly destitute of these things ; and the warm Italian scenery which abounded there, aided as it was by the fine river in the vale, made that place indeed an enviable dwelling for the quiet unobtrusive soul, who found in the gay world little to delight—little, in truth, to make him anxious to exchange the pure breeze of retirement for the smoky air of crowded cities. There is more wisdom in the taste of the man of retirement and seclusion than the flutterers of fashion are aware of.

To be alone, is not to rest on the hill side watching the calm tints of evening, or listening to the far-off sounds of the "sauntering herd." And then how pleasant is it to enjoy all the delights of country life with some friendly and congenial soul, by whose converse the sky is made more beautiful, the fields acquire a richer green, and the stream runs by us with a softer music: the bard was surely right when he said,

"Oh, let me have a friend in my retreat,
That I may whisper 'Solitude is sweet.'"

And in the village where Alice grew and blossomed, there was not wanting society enough to please the man of retired and regular habits: there was the social party in the winter, and the rustic one in summer time, not the less social and enjoyed. In the neighbourhood, too, there were many remains of ancient pride and splendour—the decayed castle, and the martial ruins of other days: these things gave a spirit, and, it may be truly said, a reverence to the spot, reminding the contemplative inhabitant of the scenes which had been witnessed there of old, and calling to mind a thousand pictures of bold and rude antiquity.

But what added not a little to the comfort of the village, was the spirit of harmony which reigned throughout it: the rich were kind, and the poor were grateful: neatness and industry dwelt every where—the eye could scarcely light upon a cottage which did not display the pride of its inhabitants, at the same time that it shewed the liberal hand of the wealthier neighbours. In the midst of all these things the father of Alice was

always where he should be—respected by the lord, and beloved by the peasant—forming as it were a connecting link between them, and by his consistent and unaffected life, preaching more to the hearts and understandings of his people than he could ever do by precept: he silently went about, as the Minister of God should do, correcting the pride of wealth and station, whilst on the other side he inculcated the wholesome lessons of gratitude and duty. How much in this world does the happiness of ourselves and others depend upon the reciprocal kindness and attention of all ranks! and how frequently does it happen that people neglect the most obvious means of producing happiness!

If the observer would have seen a picture of the peace and comfort which I have described, one Sunday in the village would have shewn it to him. The Vicar so well corrected the errors, and allayed the occasional irritation of his people, that *one* house of prayer saw the assembled villagers on the Sabbath morning; there were no religious heart-burnings—no mistaken bigots to spread dissension, and promote discord in that House of God. Who has not felt a peculiar sentiment when he approached that village church?—it stands in the midst of the finest scenery, with here and there some venerable trees half obscuring the sacred pile, whilst above them all, the ivy-mantled spire points to Heaven; and then the quiet of the scene, which looks so like unto devotion, and reads a silent but forcible lesson to mortality. The tombs of the village church-yard are not like those in crowded places: they are rude, but at the

same time appear so hallowed, that we know not why our voice is hushed when we approach them, and the tongue involuntarily whispers in the presence of the dead. In towns or cities I never feel like this—I can carelessly walk over the populous graves; but in the country receptacle of the departed, I dare not tread upon the little well-trimmed mound which tells me that some brother sleeps beneath.

The Vicar, as I have said before, was a plain good man; and his sermons naturally partook of his spirit: they were such as all could understand, and all might profit by: he sought not to inflame the passions, and work upon the imaginations of his people; but strove to inculcate such doctrines as would make them walk in holiness of life before their Maker: he taught them, not that speculative religion which, on vulgar minds, works most frequently to a disregard of moral conduct; but he urged them to the practice of all charity, meekness, loving-kindness and forbearance, that by their fruits they might be known; and happy indeed was that good man in the reflection, that God had so blessed his labours, and that he had not preached in vain!

The Vicar's lady contributed not a little to the comfortable state of the village. She was kind and affectionate to all, with the best of hearts; but at the same time she was somewhat the reverse of her husband in one particular, being rather more fond of the splendour and gaiety of the world than either suited the taste of the Vicar, or her situation in life; yet she suffered not these things to grow upon her, but strove to subdue

her spirit and her inclinations, so that they might conform to the duties of her station. Perhaps these natural feelings of the Vicar's wife are not so unamiable in women, as they would appear in men; and it may be, that they serve, if properly regulated, to throw a tinge of delicate sentiment over the female character.

Mr. and Mrs. Allan had two daughters—the youngest of whom was Alice: she was now in her seventeenth year, and it might be truly said that she was beautiful. Nursed in the bosom of the most romantic scenery, she was moulded by nature into a form of the deepest sentiment and sensibility. It is in the paths of seclusion that the mind becomes most alive to the generous impulses; and it would indeed be strange, if by habituating oneself to the purest associations, we were not in some degree improved by them. In crowded places, the mind is so frequently disturbed by a variety of scenes: and the impressions made upon it are so slight, that every thing becomes matter of form—manners supply the place of sincerity, and fashionable courtesy serves instead of true feeling and warm-heartedness. But Alice Allan was a pure child of the circumstances and scenery in the midst of which she grew—warm, generous, and unsuspecting, she could neither conceal her feelings of regard nor those of aversion. As she grew up she carried with her all eyes and all hearts—her smile, so frank and so confiding, was never subdued by the rules of art, or thawed into a mere contraction of feature by the cold touch of modish calculation. Her



ALICE ALLAN.

India service, had retired, with his wife and a family of six children, to a place where he might be enabled to support his respectability, and raise up his children, with economy and comfort. The Major lived near the vicarage, and the inmates of the two dwellings were as one family. With the gentlemanly manners that distinguish the military profession, the wounded officer possessed great information and a faculty of imparting his knowledge to others with a rare facility. Often in summer time would the members of the two families crowd around him as he sat beneath an old elm in his garden, to catch from his lips the stories of his younger days—to hear him recount the dangers of the soldier's life, and breathe the glorious and exalted sentiments which belong to the profession. But none hung on his story with such silent interest as Alice : whilst the others listened with deep attention to his tale, she pressed a little nearer to him, and leaned upon his shoulder, with her bright eyes fixed upon his face as he told of circumstances calculated to awaken the deepest feeling.

One summer evening, as was their frequent practice, the two families proceeded into the vale to pass a few hours in social converse. They had chosen for their meeting as sweet a spot as could well have been formed by nature. On one side was a hanging wood, of the most delightful foliage ; and now the flowers of nature were in all their pride of sweetness and beauty. On the other side, a rock presented many curious chambers, the entrance to which was hung round with spar of the most romantic description. In the middle was a pure

piece of the greenest turf, which extended itself in a winding form for a considerable distance, with the rock on the one side of the quiet valley, and the wood and the flowers on the other. Out of the rock in several parts came gentle falls of water, which ran along the vale in channels that were formed without the assistance of human skill—and those peaceful waters spoke, as they murmured along, with a truth and a feeling which alone belong to nature. In the distance, a ridge of hills gave a pleasing diversity to the landscape, and the spire of the village church in the mid-ground added to the quiet beauty of the scene. Here the party were assembled, and Alice was busily engaged with her young friends in preparing for tea. Mr. Allan and the Major had strolled for a few moments from the rest, when a young officer presented himself rather suddenly to the attention of the ladies. “Here’s Henry!” exclaimed one of the little ones as she ran first to her mother, and then to her long-absent brother. The fond tear of the mother fell on the cheek of her son, whom she had not seen since her residence in the village, and the Major hurried to the spot with the proud flush in his face as he said, in rather a subdued tone, “My brave boy!” and embraced the young stranger. The whole party shared in the pleasure of this meeting, and tears—those joyous tears, so unlike to those of sadness—glistened in many an eye. The young man came, too, at a pleasant time, and met them at a place, where he had often been the theme of their conversation; for, as he was a stranger to the Vicar and his family, having

entered the army at a very early age, he was frequently described by his sisters for the gratification of their friends, and many conjectures were formed as to what kind of a young soldier he was. The Major's account of his son had always been brief—seldom extending his description beyond the expressions of, "He's a brave boy, and as good as he is brave—the lad once saved my life." Often, very often, did Alice urge the Major to tell the story of his son's career, but the old man always chucked her with a smile that told the bright-haired girl that he would talk on any other subject, but would not gratify her curiosity on that. The young officer was not long a stranger; the very place where they had met—the seclusion, and beauty of the scenery—all conspired to make them sooner and better acquainted than formal and fashionable introductions could do. If there be one thing more calculated than another to do away with cold reserve and distant formality, it is a meeting such as I have described. You may step into a drawing-room, hear your name announced to *strangers*, and, after some hours spent in their society, leave them *as such*; but take your tea on the green grass, with the flowers around you, and the natural music sounding over your head—and then if you can long remain unsocial or distant when the kindest looks are upon you, I would have you speedily conveyed from the spot.

The young Lieutenant had obtained a short leave of absence from his regiment previous to his embarkation for the Continent, and he anxiously flew to his parents to receive their blessing and advice before he once more

risked his life in the service of his country. He was a soldier in all his manners; and united to a fine person a commanding and expressive face. He was indeed a man of warm feeling and highly-cultivated mind. It is a mistake, I suspect, not unfrequently fallen into, to imagine that refinement of manners and delicacy of sentiment do not belong to the character of the soldier; I cannot but think, however, that true bravery is naturally allied to fine sentiment and generous sensibility. Yes! valour is the devoted purpose of an exalted and dignified mind.

During the short stay of the young officer amongst his friends, they frequently visited together the delightful valley where they first had met; and here they forgot in the pleasures of the present, that their parting was so near: here, as they walked at evening, in the calm beauty of such a scene, it was no wonder that they became doubly interesting to each other, and that Alice, with her romantic fancy and warm heart, felt a peculiar interest in the character and fate of the young soldier. But he was the son of her friend—his converse was so interesting—and in a few days he would leave them! These were powerful reasons therefore why she should seek his society—and they were not less powerful on another mind.

The young man had now only one day more to pass with those who were so dear to him; and the inmates of the vicarage were therefore invited to dine with the Major and his family. They met together at an early hour—there were the same fond looks, and quite as gay as ever, save that perhaps the mother's anxious eye was fixed

more steadily than it was wont to be upon her son, and that the old officer gave now and then a more hurried look towards him. After dinner when the Major filled his glass, all eyes were fixed upon him; "My friends," said he, "you'll all take some wine—and drink success to my boy." A tear rolled down the old man's cheek, and he embraced his son—"You are going, Harry, into the field of honor—remember your country, boy, and your name—and may God bless you!" "And may God bless you!" they all repeated, except Alice, who looked in the face of the young soldier, and was silent. Till then she knew not how powerful an interest she felt towards him, and his deep look in answer to her gaze spoke with a most persuasive eloquence. Alice was only in her seventeenth year, and till she had seen the son of her friend knew not what it was to feel so great an anxiety for the fate of a stranger; and now she thought that it was only her feelings at the scene which she had witnessed, and that perhaps she should forget it when he had left them. In the evening the party took one of their favourite walks; and as the older folks strolled quietly along, Alice and the young soldier found themselves, undesignedly, alone upon the very spot where they first had met. They had spoken but little, and knew not why, since they left the party, and yet they wandered on, unconscious of the distance, and living only in that fine abstraction, which the busy world knows not of. At length the young man paused, and gently pressing the hand of Alice to his lips, he whispered—"Here, Alice, we first met—and to-morrow I shall leave

you." The sweet girl looked upon his face, and as the tears trickled down her cheek,—(for she then for the first time wept in the fulness of an affectionate heart,)—she said, in soft, devoted accents—"But we shall meet again?" "Yes, Alice, we *may* meet—but not as now—perhaps another"—"No, my Henry! never," she exclaimed; and he pressed her to his heart, and they vowed those vows which may be breathed, but never can be spoken. "And Heaven shall witness," said the youth, "how I will strive to gain a name of honor for thee." Already the day had passed, and the fair night was sparkling over head, when the remainder of the party joined, and together they proceeded homeward: the silence of the two stragglers—the thought which sat upon the brow of Alice, that brow which was so seldom thoughtful—passed away without observation; for all were too deeply interested with their own feelings to observe or speculate upon those of others. And thus they reached the Major's cottage, when, as was his custom after their evening walk, the good Vicar implored the blessing of God upon them, and they separated for the night.

The two families saw each other early in the morning, and all of them took breakfast together at the vicarage. Their meal was scarcely concluded, when the arrival of the stage at the gate called the young visitor from his friends, and with a hurried salutation he took his leave. It was natural enough that so many anxious eyes should follow the coach as it drove down the road in the valley; and one could understand the feelings of

the father, when he struck his cane with more force than usual on the ground, and said "Farewell, my boy!"

If so great a sensation was produced by a parting such as we have witnessed, it is to be remembered that the son of the old soldier left his friends to embark with his regiment upon an expedition, in which it was fair to calculate, many a brave heart would be made cold, and many a gallant youth be snatched away.

And Alice was not the least anxious of the party. To her indeed the fate of Henry became an object of the dearest interest, and she soon found that all her hopes and wishes were with him. He too had promised never to forget—never to desert her—and she believed him.

Amongst the neighbouring gentry (all of whom indeed were on the best terms with the Vicar and his family), none were more esteemed by them than an elderly Baronet and his son and daughter who resided at the Priory, about a mile from the village. This family lived a considerable part of the year in the country; Sir Richard and his son partaking in all the sports of the field, and enjoying health with those amusements that belong peculiarly to the world of quiet and retirement. The son of the Baronet had just returned from the Continent; he was a young man not destitute of the qualifications of the gentleman, nor indeed was he without a respectable share of talent; added to which, his principles were of the most exalted kind, and he studied in all his actions to make those around him happy. There

is no surer way for a man to bring a large store of comfort into his own possession, than by pursuing such a course through life as will tend to promote that of others. The theory of being happy (as happy as we can hope to be in this uncertain state) is a more simple one than we generally imagine. How much is done by moderating the passions, regulating the temper, and, in our morals and manners, harmonizing with the better elements about us!

Alice and her parents were frequently at the Priory; and so great a favourite was the Vicar's daughter there, that for weeks together she was accustomed to enjoy Sir Richard's hospitality. On one of these visits was Alice, when the Baronet's son returned from travel. Several years had passed away since the young man had seen his sister's friend, and then she was a pretty bright-haired girl. But now she had arrived at that interesting time when the chaste reposing look of woman mingles with the ingenuous playfulness of youth. Alfred Dalford had seen something of the world, and had mixed in the gay throng of fashionable beauty; but still he passed through it untouched, and it was left for Alice to make that impression on his heart, and to inspire those feelings which do not naturally belong to the giddy round of pleasure. Men may *admire* the creature of fashion—the well dressed courtly *belle*—but so much insincerity and mannered heartlessness are too frequently her companions, that the well-regulated mind finds little to *delight* it in the walk of courtly life.

The attentions of Alfred were soon perceived by his friends, and Alice heard with regret those sentiments of regard from his lips which she could never return. Her feelings of friendship towards him were of the warmest kind; and the Baronet loved her as his own; he beheld therefore, with delight the growing attachment of his son for Alice, and fondly hoped that he should live to see them united. Sir Richard had already spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Allan on the subject, and no objection could be raised by them to an alliance with so worthy and ancient a family. The Vicar, however, remembered the visit of Henry Wartley, and feared that the affections of his beloved daughter were fixed on him. He *feared* this, because the young Lieutenant was a soldier of fortune, with no inheritance but his sword; and the daughter of a country clergyman is not often blessed with a large portion. He saw therefore in an alliance between Alice and the young officer many circumstances of an untoward nature; and his anxious love for his child made him wish that she were happily settled near him. Still he urged not the suit of Alfred Dalford; but contented himself with saying, that if she could love him, the union promised much comfort for them all. Mrs. Allan, in this affair, did not act so generous a part as the Vicar. Her feelings of pride were called into action, when she contemplated her daughter as a Baronet's lady, and (naturally enough perhaps) she forgot that happiness is not produced by wealth—and that *a dinner of herbs where love is, makes a more sumptuous feast than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.*

It is indeed a strange circumstance, that with the knowledge of this truth before their eyes, parents should so often be the means of sacrificing their children at the shrine of interest. And if afterwards those children should bring dishonour on themselves and their family, why should it excite our surprise? I would not for a moment advocate imprudent marriages; but most solemnly would I impress upon my readers, the sinfulness of making that holy compact subservient to the baser feelings of our nature; and would point to the shame that too frequently follows from such conduct, as a *worldly* consideration against it.

The attachment of Alfred Dalford for Alice became more and more devoted, and his friends were anxious for his marriage. But the heart of Alice had been too firmly fixed upon another, to suffer any change; and now, when urged to give her hand and her affections to Alfred, she frankly confessed to him that she could never be his wife. This resolution was a subject of much regret to the Dalford family, and Alfred did not long remain in the village when he found it was in vain to hope for the love of one who was as beautiful in candour as in form.

No one felt more disappointment at her resolution than Mrs. Allan. By every argument she had endeavoured to wean her daughter from that first love which had grown so soon upon her; and at times she would almost have forgotten the mildness of her nature, but that the Vicar was at hand, with a father's care, to take his beloved daughter to his bosom. There was yet one

hope in which the Vicar's wife indulged ; it was, that by the long absence of Henry, her daughter would at length forget him, and yield to the wishes of her friends.

Previous to the young officer's departure from the village, he had promised Alice that but a little time should intervene before he would inform her of his health and professional progress. Shortly after he had left England, Alice received a letter from him, in which he warmly declared the strength of his affection, and spoke of the pleasure which he should derive from a frequent correspondence with one, whose love cheered him in his career, and animated him with more than common ardour in his toilsome but glorious profession. Alice replied to this letter, with all the frankness and sincerity that naturally belonged to her ; and now she was sad to think that, although many months had passed away, no second letter came from her Henry ; this sensibly affected her, because his friends had several times received packets from the young officer, in which his good health was spoken of, and his remembrance kindly given to all but Alice. It had been agreed, before his departure, that his letters to her should not be inclosed in his father's packet ; but it was in vain that she walked to the house in the village where she hoped to find a fresh assurance of her Henry's love—no such assurance came. She strove to disguise her wounded feelings—and wept in secret at the thought that he, whom her young heart, in its steadfastness and truth, had so fondly reposed upon, should so soon have forgotten his vow, and have left her to pine in hopeless love. Still the

pride of Alice suffered her not to murmur openly; and she struggled unceasingly to blot out the remembrance of one who had thus deserted her.

But this struggle was too much for her young heart;—and her friends saw, with grief, that the cheerful countenance had forsaken her, and that she grew more and more thoughtful and abstracted in her manner. It was soon apparent that her constitution had not escaped uninjured—for the rosy, joyful look of health had faded from her cheek, and a melancholy paleness had usurped its place. Often did the good Vicar weep over his sorrowful daughter, and strive to soothe her with the comfort of his love. Two years had now elapsed since Henry Wartley had visited his father's house; and during that time she whom he had left in youthful beauty had pined away, almost to the grave. Alice was now so weak that she could walk but little, although the grateful season of spring had brought health into the valley, and filled the cheerful air with mildness. It was in vain that her father sought to divert her mind by change of scene—she daily grew worse, and in a few weeks was unable to leave her room. The kindness of the Major's family had never left her—but it only served to increase her pain, by reminding her of him whose love she needed most. All her friends knew well the affection which she bore to Henry, but they were ignorant, in a great measure, of the immediate cause which was wearing her down to the tomb.

To judge of the grief which the illness of Alice spread

through the village, it was enough to see the anxiety of the simple villagers on the last Sunday of her attendance at the parish church. As she slowly passed from the vicarage, leaning on her father's arm, the young and old gathered quietly around, at a little distance: tears were on many an aged cheek, and Alice heard the silent prayer that broke from the heart of a grey-headed cottager, as he hobbled behind her to the house of God. She turned round, and brushing the tear from her pale cheek, told the old man she should soon be well.

It is a melancholy thing to see age go down into the grave, even though its measure of years be full—we cannot look upon the weakening frame, and contemplate its speedy dissolution, without a soul-felt pang. But when youth lies on its couch of sickness—when the pulse of the young heart is decaying—how sorrowful is the lesson that it reads to humanity!

Although incapable of leaving her room, Alice was still strong enough to sit up during a portion of the day. Her easy chair was carefully adjusted, and placed near the window. It was her wish to be thus situated, that she might enjoy the fine landscape before her, and taste the freshness of the flowers that grew around her window. And when at evening she was thus seated, training as she was wont the spreading woodbine within her casement, you would have dropt a tear to see how anxiously the village rustics looked upon her as they, lingering, passed along.

It was a fine evening, and Alice was somewhat gayer

than usual—the Major and his family were around her, the old officer telling a few of his best stories over again—and all the rest thinking more of her pale, waning form, than of the soldier's narrative. He then spoke of his son, and told them that the young Captain (for this was now his rank) would very soon be with them. This information brought a smile of gladness over many faces; and the Major's youngest daughter, in her joyful mood, went up to Alice, and gently taking her hand, kissed her, and exclaimed, "Won't *you* be glad to see our Henry?" Alice was deeply agitated at the question—she could not reply; for her feelings had overpowered her sickly frame, and she fell back exhausted on the arm of her father, who had sprung to her relief. All were greatly alarmed at the death-like paleness which sat upon the cheek of the young sufferer; and the little one, who had asked the painful question, wept aloud to think of the mischief she had done.

When the Vicar had laid his daughter on her bed, and observed that she was still insensible, the good man fell involuntarily upon his knees, and prayed aloud: as if with one feeling, all (save the anxious mother who was seeking to revive her child) knelt around the bed of sickness, and joined in the earnest supplication of their friend and pastor. At length, whilst every eye was silently fixed upon the face of Alice, watching for the first sign of returning life, a deep sigh broke upon the stillness of the apartment—she raised her feeble hand to her forehead, and, in disturbed accents, cried "Oh, my

Henry! have you so soon forgot me?" The Major turned hastily from the bed side, and sought to hide the agitation of his feelings by walking to the window: at that moment the wicket opened, and he exclaimed "My boy!" None had time to ask his meaning, before his son was in the room: a hasty and painful greeting passed when the young man flew to the couch of Alice, time enough to look upon her as she again opened her eyes to the passing scene. When she looked up, there was a wildness in her gaze—and for a moment she did not recognize the stranger who supported her. "Alice!" he exclaimed, "do you not know me?" She raised herself from her pillow, and felt his tears upon her cheek. She did not speak; but her look of kindness told him how much he was beloved. The scene was one calculated to affect most deeply the tender frame of Alice; and fearing for the consequence, the Major led his son from the vicarage. His earnest enquiries concerning the object of his affection, drew from his father a detail of all that had occurred since his departure; and the youth in return confessed how miserable his life had been at the thought that Alice had forgotten him. Before his departure, he had promised to write to her, and it was agreed that he should send his letters to the house of an old woman in the village. This old dame had long been an occasional servant at the vicarage, and had consented to be the bearer of his packets to Alice: to his first letter he received an affectionate answer, and he was happy in the reflection that

he possessed the love of one to whom his heart was so unchangingly given. Shortly afterwards he wrote another letter—but to this he had no reply: a second and a third time his packet was unanswered. At this period a young friend of Alfred Dalford's joined his regiment, and from him he learnt that Alice was about to become the wife of another. Deeply wounded at this intelligence, he resolved never to address her again, and sought in the midst of war to forget that he had ever loved. When but a few stages from the village, however, he learnt from a young clergyman of a neighbouring parish, that so far from Alice having married another, she had declined the offer of Alfred Dalford, in spite of the earnest entreaties of some of her friends. Then he upbraided himself for having, in his pride, neglected to inquire into the truth, before he turned away from her whose constancy and truth had brought so many sorrows on her head. It was soon discovered how it happened that Alice had not received the young officer's letters. Mrs. Allan, with those mistaken feelings, which we have before noticed, imagined that if her daughter ceased for a time to correspond with Henry, she might be induced to accept the offer of Alfred Dalford: with this view, she obtained Henry's letters from the old woman at the cottage, and destroyed them: too soon she found that this imprudent course had nearly brought her daughter to the grave; and whilst she saw the flower of her house decaying, her feelings of shame prevented a disclosure which might have saved so many pangs to those whom she loved so fondly. Her error was not of

the heart—for mother never loved a child more dearly than she did Alice.

Happily, however, for them all, the young sufferer soon revived; and the two families lived to enjoy the blessings which a closer union produced for them.

MY AUNT'S ARM CHAIR.

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“ My Aunt Nancy's Arm Chair ! ” what makes me reverence it so much ? That, by the bye, is a difficult question, and the best way to get rid of it is—by repeating that *I do reverence the Chair*. This may be called a lady's method of answering ; but there's more mean-

ing in it than one sees at the first blink : and above all, it leaves us to fill up at leisure, with a suitable quantity of argument, all the ground between the proposition and the conclusion.

It is now some thirty years ago, as nearly as my one or two grey hairs will let me reckon time, since I first saw my then old Aunt in her elbow seat ; my father took me on a visit to the ancient lady one summer evening, as a reward for greater care and attention than I was in the habit of generally giving to any thing in my youth—and I am almost constrained to think that my improvement in this matter would not quite satisfy my honoured father were he now alive to witness it. “ Ned, my lad,” said the Doctor, for such was my parent’s honourable title, “ you are a stout fellow now—can you walk five miles, d’ye think ? ”—“ Yes, father,” replied I, tucking in carefully the lace of my boots, and stepping across the room with an air, to shew my pedestrian movements. “ Come along, then, I’ll take you to see your old Aunt.” And much had I heard of her, from my mother, to whose power of description I owe a great portion of the fanciful conceit that has attended me from my youth upwards.

“ This is Ned,” said my father, as he put his hand on the crown of my head, and led me to receive the blessing of the old lady. I shall not soon forget the look she gave me—and from the first moment of our acquaintance, I thought to myself that she was indeed a strange old woman.

Her residence was that sort of thing which will do

very well in description; for to speak soberly about it there was an air of quiet in the spot itself, and much of the picturesque in the country round. The house, or rather cottage, was a small one—you may see such every day scattered through the valleys, or skirting the hills of counties some hundred miles from town. Take your pencil, gentle reader, (and methinks some female hand will sketch the picture for me) then mark out a dwelling of two floors, with eight windows in the front: three steps, kept as clean and white as a good rustic girl can keep them, lead to the door of the cottage: flowers, in the season, grow on either side (and we should visit it when they are blooming); a little lawn slopes down to those green pales that divide my Aunt's domain from the forest. Two acres comprise her grounds, but I should note that yon little cot, covered with the woodbine and the ivy, on the right of her dwelling, is the habitation of the gardener and his wife,—not that my Aunt could afford to keep a range of servants; but Old John the gardener waited at dinner full three-parts of the year, and milked a cow, as often as she needed it, from January to December. He was a kind old fellow when I knew him first, and yet he never was a father. I shall not fail to remember him, with his ladder against the wall, and his blue apron, out of the pocket of which, to my glad surprise, has often issued the ripe and unexpected peach. He died at last, full of years and good humour, and with as much truth as I have ever rhymed in after life, I wrote his epitaph when I was boy.

This is a slight digression, but it is always difficult

for me to get out of my Aunt's garden, without thinking a little of him who trimmed it so well. But to return to my description; an old and stately elm flourished in the centre of the lawn, and how many stories have I listened to under its branches! The seat there is sacred in my memory even now; and when the bustle of the world spares me a quiet evening hour, I return in imagination to that loved spot, and methinks the moon never sails so brightly, as when she passes over that fine old tree. Through the grounds, to the right of the house, ran a clear stream, which gradually swelled into magnitude as it went on to meet the beautiful river in the valley. Considerable taste had been displayed in laying out these grounds,—nature was not cut into fantastical patches, but improved in such a manner as convinced me that had the old Lady possessed an extensive domain, it would not have suffered from the want of careful culture. There was much of varied beauty in the country round—and if I revisit it too often, it must be remembered that in its solitude I was nursed.

Well! my Aunt and I soon became good friends, and as years grew upon me, she honoured me with her confidence. On the evening of my first introduction to her she was seated in her favourite arm chair, near the window of her sitting room. I remember, as 'twere but yesterday, the venerable and dignified figure which presented itself when she walked across the room: her hair was as white as it well could be—and it seemed that she had lost little of it at the age of seventy. I had always heard my mother and father say that she had

been a fine woman in her time; and I called to mind many of their commendations when I beheld her. Nor do I now forget the first blessing that she gave me. "I pray to God (said she, with a strong emphasis) that he may be a worthy man—and, rich or poor, never lose his independence." The words struck me forcibly.

Ten years after this, at the Midsummer vacation, I was again visiting my aunt at her cottage, and then it was that among other things she related to me the history of my uncle Robert. I was at that time eighteen years old, and therefore ought to be able substantially to repeat the family narrative. The motive of the old lady in setting before me the follies and the vices of my uncle's life was an anxious interest for my well-doing; perhaps she saw in me those evidences of a warm and irregular disposition which too frequently bring many sorrows upon the head of its possessor. *Some* of these I have felt; and if I have fortunately escaped *others*, I owe it chiefly to the pious care taken of my youth, and to those noble lessons which she, of whom I now speak, knew so well how to impart. Yes, aided by her counsel, and by the love-fraught precepts and example of my parents, I thank Providence that I have been enabled to steer, with somewhat of honour, and no small degree of comfort, through the stormy and passionate way of youth. I have the greater reason to rejoice in this my good fortune, because the experience of riper years abundantly convinces me, that under other circumstances, I might have been a disgrace to those who

loved me so well, and have laid up for my age a store of deep remorse. O! thrice happy is he whose early disposition towards evil is gently subdued, and who is carefully trained to hate the cowardice of doing deeds that are pitiful and unjust.

But to the history of my uncle. He was the youngest son of Sir William M'Alton, a Baronet, with a large family and a small estate. This is a conjunction which very frequently happens in life, as if to spoil all our sober calculations, or rather to call up the energies of a race which has been indolent for too long a season. The sons of Sir William were four, and he had also three daughters; but my business just now is with Robert, and therefore I shall pass by the rest. The early days of my uncle were attended to with much care, so far at least as his education was concerned. Sir William resided three-parts of the year at his seat in Wales; and Mr. Griffith, a neighbouring clergyman, was appointed the tutor of his sons. Robert was designed for the Bar; and after his return from College, where, as report went, he had gained some credit, the family expectation was great as to his ultimate success. But nothing can be more deceptive, in a general way, than the reputation which we bring with us from College. The system of education pursued there is one particularly calculated to give to a young man all the currency of *learning*; but the acquisition of *knowledge* does not always accompany it. There is indeed a great deal of difference, as I found very early in life, between the sensible and the

learned man. But to be sure it is too much to expect ~~that~~ our Universities should do all for men who will do nothing for themselves.

Robert M'Alton was somewhat a *brilliant* man—one of those ready wits that can turn trifles to great account, whilst the more profound thinker would altogether pass them by. As the Bar of our country is constituted at present—or, I should rather say, whilst the legal profession is made up of chicane and a grovelling mass of form and precedent—such a character as my uncle Robert will stand a good chance of success at *Nisi Prius*, provided he have patience enough to carry him along till the men within the Bar are snugly, or otherwise, disposed of. Perhaps at no period of our legal history, when we look at the mass of competitors, was there a greater lack of talent in the profession than exists at the present time. The few splendid names, which even now do honour to the Bar, are not sufficient to give a character to the mass. Above all (since those who are not highly gifted, may at least be honest) it is lamentable to think of the time-serving and want of principle which throw a stigma on the profession. What a poor and pitiful thing is he, who, for wealth, place, or distinction, hath bartered his mental honesty, and sunk to the common level of prostitution!

After his call to the Bar, my uncle did not long follow the regular course of the profession—his knowledge of Lord Linton procured for him the offer of a Secretaryship to a Minister, and this, for the sake of present ease and relying on the promises of a courtier, he im-

the heart—for mother never loved a child more dearly than she did Alice.

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over the nations: the blind respect which is paid to names and forms is only the homage of ignorance; and let but the light of improvement diffuse itself, and correct and virtuous feelings be called into life by it—then we may hope that real substantial good will be done in spreading wide the blessings of rational liberty.

My uncle's new employment naturally changed the habits of his life;—instead of returning, after the rising of the Courts, to his quiet chambers in King's Bench Walk, he was now the man of fashion, and his evenings were spent at the crowded rout and the trifling party. Unfortunately he did not escape from the contagion of these scenes—a contagion which if not immediate is nevertheless certain; for idleness and trifling dissipate the mind, and weaken the foundations of virtue. We seldom reflect, how near the connection is between folly and vice, and how soon the one is ready to open the door to the other. That my uncle should have become the man of fashion, was not to be wondered at; but that he should have sacrificed his principle has often surprised me—since whilst he was the private Secretary of his Lordship, he had gained the affections of one, whose faithfulness and devotion was equal to her love of virtue and personal beauty. Marianne, though thrown into the fashionable world at an early age, never found pleasure in its charms, or courted its brilliant nothings. That my uncle should ever have become a libertine and a gambler, when the love of such a being was at hand to correct him, is to me one of those inexplicable things that now and then occur to disturb



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for him whom, though stained with something more than follies, she yet loved so well.

The part of the narrative to which the old lady had now arrived, suggested so many painful scenes, that she wept at the remembrance of them, and I, as if anticipating them rightly, forgot (as it is called) the dignity of our sterner nature. My aunt continued.

“ We had not heard of Robert for some months; when one evening, in the depth of winter, your grandfather’s carriage was at the gate of the cottage. I was alarmed at this sudden visit—and in an instant my brother was with me. He was in a state of the deepest agitation, and it was in vain that I urged him to tell me the cause of his distress—at length he moved his hand towards the door, and I desired the servants to leave the room: ‘ He has brought dishonour on his name,’ said he, ‘ and yet he is our brother.’ The melancholy truth was soon disclosed to me—your uncle had forged a check on his patron’s banker, and before the affair could be adjusted, was arrested, and thrown into prison. His name had not yet been disclosed; but all the exertions of the banker and the Minister had failed in smothering the transaction. When your grandfather had somewhat recovered, we hastened to the prison where our brother was confined; by travelling all night, we reached the town early in the morning, and were instantly admitted to the cell of the unhappy gamester. I shall never forget the feelings which that meeting called forth. We saw the pride—the hope

of our family—the brother whom we all loved—sunk to the lowest state of degradation. As we entered his wretched apartment, he suddenly closed a book that was before him, and started from his seat. There was a nobleness of mien, and an apparent composure in his manner, which I never saw exceeded, and I cannot think of it but with surprise. He saluted us, without betraying any of those feelings which we should expect to find associated with his situation. Indeed such an impression did his manner make upon us, that we dared not allude to the dreadful crime with which he was stained. In a few moments, however, this silence was broken—the tear stood on your grandfather's cheek, and in the bitterness of his soul he exclaimed, “Oh, my brother!” Then it was that I discovered the pangs of the unhappy man, and which for a time he had so well disguised. I saw that his fine form was worn away—and could trace the anguish that sat upon his brow—and dreadfully depicted the wretchedness of his mind. ‘I should suffer calmly,’ said he, ‘but to bring dishonour on a noble house—and to break the heart of Marianne!’

“ ‘That devoted creature!’ said my aunt, in an under tone, and brushed away the tear.

“ We had not long been with our brother, when the turnkey unlocked the heavy bolt of the cell, and Marianne herself was in the arms of the unhappy man. To attempt a description of that scene would indeed be vain—the most unchanging truth and constancy had brought the daughter of a noble house into a common prison—

there to weep over and renew her devoted vows to him whom she had chosen, ruined and guilty as he was.

" 'Marianne!' said my brother, 'you must leave me, and never think again of one who has so ill repaid your love.'

" She fell upon his neck in the bitterest anguish, and exclaimed, 'You are not guilty—I will love you still.' At these words, the unhappy prisoner raised his hand to his forehead, and with a dreadful groan, sunk upon the floor. The remembrance of his guilt, and the thought of all her love, was too much for him to bear. He had struggled for a time against his feelings, but at length they overpowered him.

" During this painful scene, your grandfather and myself had remained in a state of half-consciousness. I never could correctly recall my feelings—I did not weep—nor did my brother—I have heard him often say that it seemed as if the functions of his nature had ceased. Suddenly, however, a returning sense of our situation came upon me, and I conceived a plan which was, happily for us all, successful: from that moment, I felt a more than ordinary degree of self-possession and composure.

" Alarmed by the noise which our brother's fall had caused, the gaoler and the turnkey hastened to the cell: my first care was to have Marianne removed, lest in her frantic state she should divulge the secret of her family and the real name of the prisoner. We had but a few moments longer to remain in the prison, and that time was employed in restoring our brother.

"The Governor of the gaol was a mild and humane man—he felt deeply for our situation, and did all in his power to ease the painful state of his prisoner.

"I had at first hoped that something might be done with the turnkey; but when I attentively surveyed his features, my hopes were dissipated, for I thought I beheld the plainest indication of a mind that would not betray its trust; and the event proved that such was the man. My first trial of his fidelity was on leaving the cell, when I took the opportunity of putting my purse into his hand. This he instantly returned, saying, 'No, Madam! I never take a bribe!' It was lucky for us that this man was so plain at the beginning, or he might easily have gained a knowledge of our plan, and as easily have defeated it.

"I had observed that the bed in my brother's cell, though much better than those usually allotted to prisoners, was a very bad one, and I spoke to the gaoler on the subject: he regretted that the fulness of the prison prevented his giving him a better; but, recollecting himself for a moment, he said, 'Your brother shall have my son's bed, Madam, I can easily accommodate the boy out of the prison.' This was not what I wanted; and after some entreaty, I succeeded in gaining permission to send a bed and a few other articles of comfort into the gaol: I chose the time for their arrival when your grandfather and myself were usually left alone in the cell.

"The next evening we went to the gaol about our usual hour—and shortly afterwards a sturdy little man

whom I had chosen for the occasion, entered the prison with a large hamper basket on his shoulder; luckily it was a rainy evening, and that was a sufficient reason for bringing the furniture in a closely covered basket. Hitherto every thing had favoured my plan; but when the man had deposited the hamper in the cell, the gaoler begged that I would permit his daughter to assist me in the few preparations I had to make for my brother's comfort. I tried in vain to be left alone—so I consented to accept the offer, apparently much pleased at it. I had observed that this girl had expressed much sympathy for our distress, and suddenly resolved to make her contribute to the success of my scheme: this was clear, that her being in the cell was calculated to do away any suspicion. The young woman instantly joined us—it was a dreadful risk, but the occasion was pressing, and no alternative was left me. I therefore briefly informed her of my intention—she looked anxiously round the cell—by turns at me and then at our brother; but made no reply. No time was to be lost—the prisoner placed himself in the basket—the large bolt of the door was unfastened, and we saw the carrier with the load on his shoulder pass quietly into the court-yard: here the son of the gaoler, a lad about sixteen, came up to the man, and sportingly pulled the basket, as if he would have drawn it to the ground; we saw this from the grating of the cell—a painful coldness came over me, and I seized one of the bars for support. The sister of the youth was deeply agitated, and evidently felt with us alarmed for the success of my

scheme, Luckily, however, the Governor came into the court at the instant when his son was endeavouring to pull the basket to the ground, and severely checked him for his conduct; this saved our brother, for the man passed unmolested through the outer gate. This revived me—but still the fear was, that the gaoler would return to us, and find his prisoner fled. I therefore urged the young woman to leave us alone, and tell her father that we wished to stay with our brother as long as possible that night, and to be undisturbed: it was not necessary to implore her secrecy—for the sympathies of her nature had been powerfully excited, and she obeyed them in her conduct.

“ Another circumstance of a trifling nature materially contributed to the prisoner's escape—in the cell the gaoler had placed a large screen, so as to hide the bed from those who came to visit the prisoner. When the hour of our departure arrived, the turnkey summoned us—he looked for his prisoner—I turned away too much agitated to speak to him; but your grandfather calmly said his brother had just thrown himself on the bed—the keeper threw a hasty glance round the screen, and departed—he saw the coat of his prisoner carefully adjusted on the bed, and imagined that all was safe.

“ Marianne had not been idle—she had returned to town, and well performed her part of the transaction. Our brother was conveyed on the night of his escape to the coast, where a vessel bound for America awaited him. His patron had materially contributed to this

arrangement; and his daughter was in waiting to take her farewell of the unhappy exile.

"Thus did your uncle, (said the good old lady) escape to America, where, shortly after his arrival, he took part in the war of independence, warmly espousing the cause of the Americans. In the Republican army he gained the highest honour, and was the friend of Washington; but what to him was of more value than all other earthly blessings, he never lost the love—the devoted constancy of Marianne. A few years only had elapsed after the departure of our brother, when the Minister died—and then did his daughter, in spite of all the entreaties and remonstrances of her friends, seek the adopted land of her exiled lover, and share his fortunes. Happily for them both, they were truly blessed in their distant home, and when the independence of America was firmly established, your uncle Robert retired to a romantic dwelling near Lake Champlain, and there (said my fine old aunt) he still lives with his faithful Marianne, surrounded by a family who are blessing them in their talents and honourable lives. His eldest son is now a distinguished member of the bold and independent Senate of the Republic."

A few years after my aunt had favoured me with this narrative, I learnt something of my uncle Robert, which was particularly interesting to me. It was communicated by an old college friend of his, who many years before had served in the British American army:—

"One day, (said the officer) I went to the House of

Representatives to hear a few specimens of Republican eloquence, before my return to England. The debate was opened by an old man, one of the Ministers, in a rude, but forcible speech—he was followed by an officer more distinguished for his zeal than his talent. After the latter had sat down, a short pause ensued, when a graceful young man addressed the assembly in a modest style of eloquence; at first he was not listened to with much attention; but as he proceeded, the silence of the house accompanied him, till it was broken by a general and enthusiastic cheer, which gradually swelled into one of the most encouraging shouts that I ever heard. The impression made upon me by the speech of the young orator was so great, that I was very anxious to learn his name—it was given me as Robert M'Alton—I remembered my old friend, of whose fate I had heard, and whose valour I had witnessed in the war of independence: it immediately occurred to me that the young man whose maiden speech I had been delighted with, was the son of my friend; and I therefore lost no time in making myself known to him. He received me with an unaffected sincerity, and strenuously insisted on my accompanying him the next morning to the country house of his father. 'An English friend,' said the youth, 'will gladden my father's house—for his heart is with England still.'

"My ride into the country with young M'Alton was an extremely pleasant one—he gave me abundant information on the manners of the people, and progress of the Union towards civilization and stability. It was

evening when we approached his father's dwelling. 'There are two of my sisters,' said my young companion, as we descended into a pleasant vale.—They came to meet us, and were accompanied by a sweet girl, whose welcome was first given with a feeling not to be mistaken to the young man. The plantations through which we passed were laid out with much care and taste: the natural beauty of the spot had been effectually improved—and round the lake, which on that evening was as calm as it well could be, the dark willow and the Virginia elm were scattered amongst silver poplars, maple, sassafras and sumac trees: here and there the willows bent far over the water, and seemed to rest upon the quiet bosom of the lake. It was indeed a sweet spot—and when contrasted with the breadth of uninhabited country around, it appeared like a paradise in the wilderness.

"Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake
"With the wide world I dwelt in, seems a thing
"That warns me with its stillness to forsake
"Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring."

The old officer continued—"As we neared the cottage, the youngest daughter suddenly left my hand, which she had involuntarily taken when her brother said—'Kate, this is a friend of papa's, from England'—and hastened before us to the dwelling, joyfully exclaiming, as she threw her auburn locks over her shoulder, 'I'll tell them you are coming.' My old friend met us at his door—he instantly recognised me, with a warmth of feeling for which he had always been distinguished:

I had seen his devoted wife when she was in the pride of youth—and now, that she was the mother of a fine family, and that years had been freely added to her life, I thought that she appeared as beautiful as ever. I had known your uncle when at college, and naturally pictured to myself the friend in advanced years—but I was disappointed: he appeared happy—more than happy, as far as the constancy of his wife, and the love and promise of his children, could make him; but there was a chastened melancholy in his air that told me he still bore with him some deep remembrance that could not be blotted out—

‘ One fatal remembrance—one sorrow that throws

‘ Its bleak shade alike o’er our joys and our woes.’

We took an early and frugal supper, and shortly afterwards Marianne and her daughters withdrew for the night, leaving my friend, his son, and myself to converse till we were tired. The feeling which I have alluded to was visible in all the actions of your uncle—and the devotion of his family seemed silently to reproach him for the errors of his youth. I was particularly moved by his conduct, when I saw the man whose valour was worthy of that Republic which he had done so much to establish, borne down in his declining years by the consciousness of an early crime. Before they left the room, his daughters came round his chair, and embraced him most affectionately. ‘ Good night, my

dear papa,' they both exclaimed, as their arms were together twined round his neck. He kissed them, and a tear of gratitude rolled down his cheek as he looked upon his wife, and said, 'You are like your mother, my sweet girls.' The second son, a boy about fourteen, then took his father by the hand, and before he wished him good night, looked at me, and earnestly said, 'Let the English gentleman hunt with us to-morrow, papa.' His father promised that it should be so, and the boy went away delighted.

"When we were left alone, your uncle went over the history of some portion of his life, and dwelt, with the deepest feelings, on the offence which had driven him from his native country. 'England,' he observed, 'is my home—it was the home of my fathers—and though, in this fine and free Republic, every blessing seems to surround me, my heart is English still. Here, I am removed from my friends: there was my mother, who died unconscious of the stain that had so deeply sullied my character—I had hoped to have closed her eyes in peace; but instead of doing so, the mystery of my fate hastened her end—and her last words were, 'My son Robert!' These words reproach me yet—and the love of that dear being who makes this home a home of happiness, though it pours peace into my wounded heart, still it silently reminds me of that crime which made me a wanderer and an exile; and throws a tinge of melancholy over my character. Yet, my friend, do not think that I am unhappy—if I weep, it

is from a sense of gratitude for the blessings that surround my table. But I am stained with an offence—and feel it *here*—I pray God to preserve my children in innocence and honour, that they may wipe away the stain that sullies their father.' ”

POOR PARENTS.

11

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“ The King can make a belted Knight,
“ A Marquis, Duke, and a’ that,
“ An honest man’s aboon his might,
“ Gude faith, he mauna fa’ that !”

THAT virtue is true nobility is a very trite saying; but I fear it is little more than a saying; for, the noble patent of a poor man is not much respected amongst us. I can sympathize with the young aspirant, who, destitute of the advantages of family and fortune, has to make his way through the ranks of a proud and illiberal profession—from my heart, I pity him, when he feels the silent sneer of wealthy ignorance, or the cold unbending look of pride. And what contributes materially to the mortifications of his life is the circumstance, and a painful one it is to the poor scholar, that his acute sensibility makes him feel the slightest wound.

It is in every body’s mouth, that ours is a constitution so wisely framed, and liberally fraught, that it affords to persevering merit an opportunity of acquiring the highest honours of the State. That talent some-

times meets its reward is true; but it is likewise true, that success is far more generally the prize of interest, or only to be purchased by the sacrifice of principle.

This, however, is an idle complaint—the evil *must* continue whilst political institutions have patronage to bestow, or men can be found who are anxious to enjoy it.

But what I most complain of is, the illiberal coldness with which a poor man is received in society; so that he is made to feel at every step the disadvantage of his situation, which is painful enough in other ways, without being thus administered to. But prudent fathers will estimate you by your purse, and cautious mothers strive to regulate by it their daughter's smiles. Thanks, however, to the unsophisticated feelings of youth, they are not always successful.

I met my young friend Neville under circumstances that gave me a favourable opinion both of his talents and his principles. Of his family or his means I was totally unacquainted. It was in the company of numbers, young like himself, and destined for the same pursuit, that I first became known to him. His manner deeply interested me; and from the very moment of our meeting, I felt anxious that we should be on friendly terms. He was modest in his demeanour, and now and then I beheld in his countenance the indications of a social spirit and an amiable disposition. But when the smile had passed away that gave a momentary insight to his heart, he became cold and reserved—at intervals it appeared as if he was busily engaged in restraining

his natural impulses, and disguising his thoughts and feelings. At other times I have seen him, after creating an interest in his favour not easily subdued, suddenly rise from his seat, and leave the social party to speculate on the mixture of frankness and reserve which their companion had displayed. At our second meeting, I happened to be conveniently placed for entering into conversation with Neville. He was more social than usual; and I gave him my card, accompanied with a wish to be better acquainted. This completely changed his manner—he thanked me with an air of fine feeling, but instantly left the table.

The more reserved, however, that I saw my friend, the more anxious I became to know him intimately—and at length I succeeded in procuring a visit from him: this led to a frequent intercourse, and ultimately to a friendship which I trust may be as lasting as it is sincere. One little adventure I shall notice, as it contributed materially to the frank interchange of sentiment between us: it shewed my friend in the most amiable light, at the same time that it accounts for that caution and reserve which circumstances induced him to adopt.

I must confess that after a slight acquaintance with Neville, curiosity made me desirous of knowing something of his family and friends—it was natural enough, when speaking of the scenery of some of the most favoured spots in our country—a subject which always threw an enthusiasm into the converse of my friend,—it was natural that I should fondly allude to the scenes of my boyhood, and repose again in that quiet valley

where the harmony of nature first charmed my imagination. Oft have I spoken to him of the dearest associations connected with my earliest years; but they never drew his tale of boyhood from him; and yet he listened to me with the deepest interest, and always threw around the subject a soothing charm which his poetical mind could so easily create. Once I remember we spoke of the love of parents—one of mine had recently been taken from me—she who had nursed my mind and body with such care—and I dwelt upon the subject with that melancholy fondness which even time hath not removed. “Neville,” said I, “have you parents—sisters—yet alive?” He was disturbed at the question; his feelings were powerfully roused, and he replied—“I have, my friend—but they are poor.” The tone in which he said this prevented my continuing the subject; but I was often afterwards induced to speculate upon the worldly state of his friends, and to fancy where they resided. I confess too, with feelings of shame, that at times, when the customs and prejudices of the world operated upon me, I have felt disposed to disguise my acquaintance with a friend, for fear that I should fall in the estimation of the trifling and the proud, by being associated with a poor, though a highly-gifted man. On the other hand, so little of purity is there in our conduct, I was often led to vindicate his actions, and avow my friendship, from a feeling of pride which had nothing of principle to recommend it. I was convinced that Neville would one day fill an honourable station in society—his talents, and

above all his perseverance seemed to justify this conclusion—therefore it was that I pictured to myself the ultimate success of my friend; and whilst my weakness would almost have abandoned him, my vanity and self-love made me cling to him with a firmness and devotion which I had the gratification of finding not unfrequently mistaken for a noble and generous sentiment. Besides, there was something of romance in being the first to notice and to cheer a friendless man; and there is likewise a deep mortification in being compelled reluctantly to admit the claims of an aspirant whom we have once slighted, when by his industry or talent he has placed himself far above the level of his early fortunes. Yes, I am indeed ashamed to confess that both my pride and fear contributed in the infancy of our friendship to keep me firm to Neville.

He knew this: but, as he has since acknowledged, he could hardly blame me for thus reckoning between my pride and liberality; however that may be, he must have felt a thorough contempt for my weakness, which led me too often to have recourse to a species of excuse for being known to him—a sort of mean justification before the prejudices of society. But in the midst of all this quibbling, my regard for him was great, and it increased with the developement of his character. It is too a source of great pleasure to me when I reflect that my notice of Neville has aided him more materially than I had ever hoped it would—it gave him courage in society, and induced an energy and decision of action which, though eventually he must have shewn, would

as certainly have been delayed, but for the cheering right hand of a friend. This he always confesses, and is grateful to me for more than, from principle, I deserve.

A few years after our first acquaintance, I had engaged to pass my vacation at the country seat of a relative in one of the midland counties; my old friend accompanied his invitation with a request that I would bring a professional acquaintance with me; and I strongly urged Neville to be my companion. When I mentioned the subject to him, he declined with an embarrassment of manner that somewhat surprised me. Still I pressed him to partake with me the hospitality of my friend—and at last, when I made my request with more than usual importunity, he said—"There is something in the circumstance which compels me to say—I will not go—should I do so, you would regret it as much as myself; but I cannot explain."

My old friend's residence was delightfully pleasant and retired; indeed his fortune did not enable him to live in great style; but with economy and eight hundred a-year, a man may contrive to keep up the dignity of a country squire, and maintain such a table for his friends as any one might rejoice to see after a hard day's sporting in a midland county. "The squire," for such we always called him, kept a couple of good hunters and a brace or two of dogs, as well broke for the field as a careful and keen shot could wish them. But although a sportsman in every authorized sense of the word, he did not confine his reading to the *Sporting Magazine*: he was a man of general information; and the habits

and associations of his life gave him a force and vigour of expression which always charmed me: perhaps I was the more delighted with my friend's clear and natural style, from the contrast which it formed to the tame and sophisticated mode of those with whom I was generally associated, "The squire" was not fond of disputation; but when he did argue, it was not for victory, but for truth. His manner has often convinced me how much the mind is weakened, and our perception of truth impaired, by the practice of weaving ingenious sophisms and exercising our skill in disguising the deformity of error. So powerful is the effect of habit, that after a time we become fond of sophistication, and instead of bearing up to the truth, we waste our time and faculties in the ingenious quibbles that too frequently surround it. We should not be surprised, then, that the man who pursues the better path, should acquire mental strength and vigour in his healthy exercise—that he should become decided in his character, and consistent in his conduct—qualities that are generally the companions of high moral integrity.

During my stay at the squire's, I frequently made pedestrian excursions into the surrounding country, and visited every thing that was celebrated of village antiquity: One day I strolled somewhat farther than usual in a direction which was comparatively new to me. I was pleased with the beautiful landscape that surrounded me, and reached a quiet village before I was aware of my distance from home. The first dwelling that I

came to was a small white cottage, extremely neat, with the appearance of having been recently put in its present comfortable state. Before the house was a little piece of green sward, which was divided by the gravel walk that led to the door of the dwelling. I was particularly interested with the appearance of this cottage—it stood alone, so quiet and so unpretending—it did not look like the residence of a rich man, and yet there was something about it that spoke the respectability of its inmates. As I approached the gate, an elderly man, plainly dressed, came into the garden before the cottage: he bore the marks of age less plainly than those of decay; the kindness of his glance, as he turned towards the gate, induced me to address him; and as I found myself so far from home, the old gentleman had little difficulty in persuading me to take refreshment at his dwelling; besides it was quite to my taste to do so, as I had formed a strong inclination to visit the abodes of my country neighbours in every walk of life, and to know if possible their different shades of character. This, then, was one opportunity for pursuing my favourite study. I accompanied my new acquaintance into a neat room, where we were shortly afterwards joined by his wife. She was an extraordinary woman, and I soon found that her penetration and intelligence were such as we rarely meet in life.

“You live in a sweet retirement,” I observed, as the old lady handed me the cup that ‘cheers but not inebriates.’

"Yes, we are indeed pleasantly situated—and, thank God, through the kindness of our children, we want for nothing."

"They *are* children!" said the old man, in a broken accent, while his wife was yet speaking. The manner of the aged couple was particularly touching—and the contrast was a fine one between the grateful feelings of the father and the composed dignity of his wife. Already was I deeply interested with my friends, and anxious to know more of their history.

"You have children, then?" I added.

"Six, Sir," replied the old lady; "but they are all from home; and the only thing that now and then makes us uneasy in our retirement is—that they are so far removed from us. Still we ought to be happy, for they are all in good health, and the blessing of Providence has hitherto been bountifully bestowed upon them. I pray that they may not forget, in their prosperity, the hand that helps them; for what are riches, after all, compared with a good conscience, and the treasures that this world cannot take away!"

"True!" said I, "but it is pleasant to hear of the success of those we love; particularly when, like your children, they make such use of their prosperity."

"It is indeed, Sir—I am not a stranger to this feeling; and before the world and its misfortunes taught me to look to another Power for help, and to seek other sources of pride and gratification, I have often prayed that my sons would restore the respectability of their family, and that I should see them in prosperity and

honour before I died. But I have those feelings no longer—and my greatest fear now is that success may make them wedded to this world, and cause them to forget the care of their souls. I remember, when I once expressed to my younger son the anxious hope that he would one day fill an honourable station in society, the boy vowed with an earnestness that surprised me, that he would dedicate his life to restore the fortunes of his family."

"And is he succeeding in his pursuit?" I enquired with somewhat of earnestness.

"He's a good son," said the old man, "he's going on well, Sir. I can't help being proud of him."

"Nor can I," added the old lady; "but my anxiety is for his eternal welfare: I fear that he is too sanguine in his career, and too anxious for the vanities of life. He is flattered by his friends—and pictures to himself success in a difficult profession, into which he enters without interest or fortune. But above all, I fear that his religious principles are weakened—that he does not hold fast of that faith in which I strove to rear him up. Ah, Sir, the world too frequently gives its own advantages in return for a sacrifice of religious principle.—I would rather—much rather—though we are supported by the honourable industry of our son—go down into the grave as the meanest beggar, and see him in the lowest station of society, keeping his religious principles and saving his soul, than behold him high in the enjoyment of the things of time, but having no interest in those of eternity."

"But your son, Madam," said I, "may be a good man, and yet pursue a laudable ambition."

"And so he is, Sir!"—said his father—"a good son can't be a bad man; he has given us a home in our old age."

The mother acknowledged this truth—she felt it too, it was evident, most sincerely; but recollecting herself, she observed—"If he had not done so, he would have been unworthy of his parents, though they are poor." Then turning to me, she explained at length her sentiments on religious matters, and concluded by observing—"I doubt not but my son will be an honest and an upright man; this he may be, and yet fall short of that saving grace which is necessary for his everlasting redemption. It is a fatal doctrine, and one that lulls too many into a state of fancied security, that no man's creed can be *wrong* whose life (as the deist says) is in the *right*. I feel that no one can be a true Christian, without being known by his fruits—without exemplifying in his intercourse with the world all the social and moral virtues; but I feel likewise that it is very possible for the mere moral man to present to our view a life of spotless integrity—to be kind from sentiment—benevolent from sympathy—and honourable from the deepest sense of exalted principle; and notwithstanding the possession of all these virtues, yet to be wholly destitute of that Christian humility and faith which are the evidence of a renewed nature."

I felt that these observations, if they applied to the son of my new acquaintance, were likewise applicable

to myself—and I would fain have disputed with the old lady; but she expressed herself with so much feeling, and with such an overpowering anxiety for the eternal welfare of her child, that I could not bring myself to dissent from her opinions. Finding that I was silent on points of faith, she very readily turned the subject; and the father spoke to me again of the temporal success of his children. The old man appeared to grow young once more while he talked of them—a proud smile played over his features, and a tear of feeling stood in his eye. But when last he alluded to his youngest son Henry, he paused for an expression, and could only say—"He'll make a shining man, Sir—God bless him!" As he uttered these words, he pointed to a portrait that hung on the wall behind my chair—I turned, as well to observe the likeness of the young man, as to hide my feelings, which had been deeply interested at the solicitude of two such parents for children who seemed to be so worthy of them.

The features were known to me in an instant—" 'Tis Neville's portrait!" I exclaimed hastily; and looked at the old man.—"Yes, Sir," said he, "my son—Henry."

"Your son!" I repeated—"and is *your* name Neville?"

"It is," rejoined the old man.

"Then your son is my best friend!" said I—"and was with me but a few days ago."

We were all somewhat surprised at this discovery; and for a few moments the old people looked at me in

silence. I certainly felt happy in the opportunity which was thus afforded me of contributing to their comfort—

“Is he well?”—said his mother.

“I left him full of health,” I replied.

“And going on well, Sir?” added the father.

“Yes,” said I, “most successfully. Indeed, you have reason to be proud of him; for already he fills a highly honourable station; and is universally respected for his talents and integrity. For myself, I can truly say that my esteem for him has always been great; but it is doubled now that I am acquainted with the noblest part of his character.”

From that moment I became an object of the deepest interest to the parents of my friend—and I certainly enjoyed the scene almost as much as they could. I went over minutely the history of young Neville since I had known him, every circumstance of which was listened to with an intense earnestness—no matter how trifling the occurrence, it was a father and a mother who heard it; and I was imperceptibly led into the minutest detail, by feeling so much of the pleasure that I was imparting to them. In the course of my narrative, the old man frequently uttered the warmest expressions of pride and admiration; but not so the mother of my friend,—she listened to those circumstances which related to his professional success and honourable advancement in society with an anxious composure—I marked her manner most attentively, and did not perceive a single smile upon her face when I told of cir-

circumstances calculated to awaken the proudest exultation.

It was night before we were any of us prepared for its approach; and I was easily persuaded to sleep at my new friends.' Before leaving them in the morning, the old gentleman put many of his questions over again—and I answered him with as much pleasure as before. On taking my leave of the cottage, Mrs. Neville observed to me silently—"I expect my son to visit us in a few days; but he desired me not to mention his coming, as his stay would be short, and he was anxious to be undisturbed by our neighbours; you, however, Sir, who know him so well, will I hope come and see us again when our son is here." I promised that I would, and left the cottage; the two old people little thinking that the caution of their son was particularly given on my account.

This adventure, then, thought I, in my walk homeward, explains the reserved conduct of Neville. The misfortunes and poverty of his parents, whom he now supports in independence, induced him to keep aloof from society. But he might have told his friend the secret, and at any rate have relied upon *him*. And yet I think that he was right—he knows the human heart much better than I do, and does well to preserve himself from the sneers and taunts of a proud and illiberal profession. A spirit like his would bear with patience the heavy weight of circumstances, and labour on, unmoved by all, save

"The proud man's contumely.

The time, however, may soon come when he will be able to acknowledge, with feelings of honest pride, that he owes his station to his own talents and integrity alone ; and he deserves it well, for the noble use which he has always made of his success. I know that with his limited means, and the heavy professional charges to which he has been subject, he must often have sacrificed many of the comforts of life for the noble purpose of supporting those who were dearest to him. My friend ! it was well thus affectionately ‘ to rock the cradle of declining age,’ and thou wilt be rewarded.



THE COUNTRY TOWN.



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WITH A FEW CHARACTERISTIC SKETCHES.

BY PETER HOSIER,

A NATIVE.

"Perchance some kind censorious friend may say,
"What art thou better, meddling fool ! than they?"

BYRON.

It is my native place,—in the church are the tombs of my forefathers—and those who are dearest to me still live within the circuit of that quiet town—therefore I must visit it again, in spite of all those narrow prejudices that make it so dull, and at times so unpalatable to my taste. Near the ruined Abbey, around which I have so often strolled when a boy, is the same aged tree, whose hollow trunk was so long the council-room of an evening club of young and anxious spirits. In youth they were united; but their history in after-life, so

varied and distant in its scenes, would furnish abundant matter for the philosophic hour. And I am sure that all of them who are yet alive, turn not unfrequently to their young days, and speculate, as I do, on the fate and progress of their early companions. Much should I enjoy the pleasure of meeting them all once more, within the hollow of that aged oak, and of hearing from their own lips an account of the progress they have made in active life.

There were only two of us, as I remember well, who marked out, in the enthusiasm of boyhood, the same course for our future career. The rest all took distinct and separate fields of enterprise, and, strange as it may seem, since so few there are, comparatively, who fulfil the expectations of their youth, they have every one of them hitherto been successful. I cannot but believe that the pride of daring was powerfully nursed by the sanguine and romantic spirit of our converse : so great an effect had it upon me, that even now, whenever my energy slackens, and the love of ease is creeping on me, I turn instinctively to the records of our club near the Abbey, and am ashamed to stand still.

But my companion !—he who should have led the way for me, or at least have journeyed at my side—poor Tom ! thou art far behind, and I grieve to think of thee. Thou hast a learned head, and a noble heart. What then has made thee unfortunate ? Thou wouldst not conform to the habits and temper of the world, and it has turned away from thee : thou hast followed too boldly the dictates of thy feelings, and even thine errors,

and they are many, thou hast not disguised; therefore the hypocritical have denounced thee; and the cautious kept away with a prudent reserve. From my heart, I wish thee a better fate; and thou hast yet time enough to have the proudest revenge upon the base, who have wronged thee, and the pitiful, who have sneered at thy follies, and rejoiced at thy misfortunes.

Leaving, then, my friend for a moment, it may be worth while to think a little of the peculiarities of my native town. It contains as I am informed by an old grocer, who was overseer of the parish in 1821, about 4000 souls: this is an awkward number; and, I take it, that towns whose population is above 2000, and does not exceed 6000, are the most unpleasant places in the world to reside in. They are not small enough to be social and retired, nor large enough to be liberal and enlightened. Let me have either a quiet village, or a bustling city. I do not mean to say that people are a wit better, naturally speaking, in one place than in another; but in the country town, society is so limited that it becomes aristocratical and unpleasant. Take my native place, for instance; there are six attornies, two clergymen of the establishment who do duty, and one who is master of the free school—these three gentlemen do not harmonize by any means; the two former being high Calvinists, and the latter a good Hebrew scholar, and an Armenian. Then there is one old foolish fellow, who for many years was regularly housewhipped by his lady, and he lives near the town, and officiates as a justice of the peace—once he belonged to the

thoughts of his early career are recorded in the notes about a time when the first symptoms of disease had no more power than the lightning bolt over a stone he met coming. The other things he has written down as well as the personal and private and the mysterious, many necessary to the world's sake, though now and then they are not at all within the scope of the book by way of special favour.

The gentleman above-mentioned is not the only people of feeling in the north. I have not been known however as a fair student of what you may meet at a fashionable party. There is also one M. D., who resides in the best house, and who being rich spent his leisure mainly in social life. Time at any rate is certain that the early part of his early life he practised with little success, and lost still at a neighbouring parish: where, by one of those chances, that now and then move men out of their proper sphere, he became rich and indolent: finally with his arrival in our town, and his business as a physician gratis his advice, by all that I can learn, was never considered of a nature to be estimated by many. I shall not soon forget the doctor's cane and white wig; they walk before me whenever I am troubled by aches and pains—and as they gave me the first glimpse of what a physician ought to be, so I never have of one of the tribe, without likening him at once to Dr. Merris. No much for early impressions; and my opinion of his healing skill was formed at his first visit, and has continued steadfast with me ever since. I

happened to be very ill, when the good doctor felt my pulse for the first time : my mother, kind soul as she was, stood by the bed-side, and looked most sorrowfully upon me, for there was little hope ; my father had crept softly up the stairs, and listened anxiously for the doctor's judgment. Old Jenny, she who had nursed us all from our infancy, and ruled with fond and obstinate jealousy over the chamber of the sick, had her eyes fixed upon the medical gentleman, in a very quaint and sidelong manner. " Put out your tongue, my good boy ! " and I did so—he shook his head, and whispered to my father as he passed the door. Scarcely was he clean gone when Old Jenny raised her spectacles over her eyes, and turning to my mother, said—" Lord, Ma'am, why did ye call in that stupid old fellow ? " " Hush, Jenny," replied my mother, " he can't do any harm—and he wished to see the boy ; I fear he spoke too true—and that the poor child wont get better." " Nonsense, nonsense, Ma'am," quoth Jenny—" no more fit to be a doctor than Molly Shrimps,* or than I am to be king. My life on't, the young gentleman will spin his top again in a month." And so I did—and therefore have always preferred the opinion of old Jenny to that of the doctor.

I have mentioned the physician of our town rather particularly, because he is a singular old gentleman,

* Molly Shrimps was a poor crazy dame, who told our fortunes for us, and was held in fearful repute.

and stands alone, as it were, amongst his neighbours—he does not associate cordially with any class; and therefore it would not be right for me to place him in company to which he might object. In justice I should add, that he is perfectly harmless, and inoffensive, and though he does not go to church, would never travel out of his way to do another an injury.

There are many other men of station in the place of whom I ought to speak; but they are principally dissenters from the establishment, and form a society of their own. The ministers of the independents and the methodists, never harmonize with their orthodox brethren for a month at a time; and the only occasion on which they are at all courteous to each other, is at the annual meeting of the Bible Association; then indeed they say a few civil things of one another, and pay off a full twelvemonth's score of mutual jealousy and heart-burning. But they have a relapse generally within ten days, or a fortnight at the farthest. Before I mention some particulars of my own family—the Hosiers—and point out the class to which they belong, a thought or two suggest themselves on the comparative respect that is paid to men of the same professions, in London and the country. In the former, where persons of distinction are, in the season, as thick as hops, a lord is passed by with complete indifference; and, whether known or not, a journeyman tailor looks at him as a thing of course; but let his lordship walk up the main street of a country town, and all eyes are reverently fixed upon him, and every one he meets steps off the pavement to

give the noble peer a courtly passage and the wall—a jew old clothesman would not do the like in passing through St. James's-square. I was early instructed by my father in the wholesome doctrine of paying a proper respect to my betters; and he enjoined me particularly to bear in mind, that I should give the wall to my superiors—the lawyers, the doctors, the parson of the parish, &c.; as I grew older, however, my father's advice created much difficulty in my mind, as I soon began to make it a questionable point—who were my betters? In our club near the Abbey these sort of questions were often mooted; and so republican were our sentiments, that it was well we went abroad in the world while yet so young. One little circumstance, for instance, destroyed the character of Dick Smith in the opinion of all the sober men of the town: he was a clubbist, and often contended that a stupid Peer was unworthy of respect. Dick had in his eye, when he said this, the Lord of the Manor, who was the only blessing the Peerage bestowed upon us within ten miles of our town. The Earl was rich and mean—unmarried and ignorant—an hereditary counsellor of the crown, one would scarcely take his opinion on a straw. In the house, he has been the creature of every minister of the day, no matter what his principles or measures might be—enough for the Peer, that he voted for the crown, as it is called, and was made Lord Lieutenant of his county. Dick knew this, and never thought well of the Peerage. One day he happened to go into the public room of the Post Office, and there his Lordship stood. Ah, Dick! thou

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Leaving, then, my friend for a moment, it may be worth while to think a little of the peculiarities of my native town. It contains as I am informed by an old grocer, who was overseer of the parish in 1821, about 4000 souls : this is an awkward number ; and, I take it, that towns whose population is above 2000, and does not exceed 6000, are the most unpleasant places in the world to reside in. They are not small enough to be social and retired, nor large enough to be liberal and enlightened. Let me have either a quiet village, or a bustling city. I do not mean to say that people are a wit better, naturally speaking, in one place than in another ; but in the country town, society is so limited that it becomes aristocratical and unpleasant. Take my native place, for instance ; there are six attornies, two clergymen of the establishment who do duty, and one who is master of the free school—these three gentlemen do not harmonize by any means ; the two former being high Calvinists, and the latter a good Hebrew scholar, and an Armenian. Then there is one old foolish fellow, who for many years was regularly housewhipped by his lady, and he lives near the town, and officiates as a justice of the peace—once he belonged to the

church, but has latterly seceded, and become a Unitarian; added to these there are three surgeons, one grocer and one linen draper, who are admitted into what is called the *best society*. The other drapers, for there are five more, as well as two grocers, a land surveyor, and an apothecary, belong properly to the second class, although, now and then, they are just admitted within the circle of the first, by way of especial favour.

The gentlemen above-named, are not the only people of quality in the town; I have set them down however as a fair sample of what you may meet at a fashionable party. There is also one M. D., who resides in the best street, and who being rich, gained his diploma, nobody knows how. This at any rate is certain, that for many years of his early life he practised with little success, and less skill at a neighbouring parish: when, by one of those chances, that now and then move men out of their proper sphere, he became rich and indolent: forthwith he removed to our town, and did business as a physician gratis: his advice, by all that I can learn, was never considered of a nature to be estimated by money. I shall not soon forget the doctor's cane and white whig; they walk before me whenever I am touched by aches and pains—and as they gave me the first picture of what a physician ought to be, so I never hear of one of the tribe, without likening him at once to Dr. Moon. So much for early impressions; and my opinion of his healing skill was formed at his first visit, and has continued steadfast with me ever since. I

happened to be very ill, when the good doctor felt my pulse for the first time : my mother, kind soul as she was, stood by the bed-side, and looked most sorrowfully upon me, for there was little hope ; my father had crept softly up the stairs, and listened anxiously for the doctor's judgment. Old Jenny, she who had nursed us all from our infancy, and ruled with fond and obstinate jealousy over the chamber of the sick, had her eyes fixed upon the medical gentleman, in a very quaint and sidelong manner. " Put out your tongue, my good boy ! " and I did so—he shook his head, and whispered to my father as he passed the door. Scarcely was he clean gone when Old Jenny raised her spectacles over her eyes, and turning to my mother, said—" Lord, Ma'am, why did ye call in that stupid old fellow ? " " Hush, Jenny," replied my mother, " he can't do any harm—and he wished to see the boy ; I fear he spoke too true—and that the poor child wont get better." " Nonsense, nonsense, Ma'am," quoth Jenny—" no more fit to be a doctor than Molly Shrimps,* or than I am to be king. My life on't, the young gentleman will spin his top again in a month." And so I did—and therefore have always preferred the opinion of old Jenny to that of the doctor.

I have mentioned the physician of our town rather particularly, because he is a singular old gentleman,

* Molly Shrimps was a poor crazy dame, who told our fortunes for us, and was held in fearful repute.

and stands alone, as it were, amongst his neighbours—he does not associate cordially with any class; and therefore it would not be right for me to place him in company to which he might object. In justice I should add, that he is perfectly harmless, and inoffensive, and though he does not go to church, would never travel out of his way to do another an injury.

There are many other men of station in the place of whom I ought to speak; but they are principally dissenters from the establishment, and form a society of their own. The ministers of the independents and the methodists, never harmonize with their orthodox brethren for a month at a time; and the only occasion on which they are at all courteous to each other, is at the annual meeting of the Bible Association; then indeed they say a few civil things of one another, and pay off a full twelvemonth's score of mutual jealousy and heart-burning. But they have a relapse generally within ten days, or a fortnight at the farthest. Before I mention some particulars of my own family—the Hosiers—and point out the class to which they belong, a thought or two suggest themselves on the comparative respect that is paid to men of the same professions, in London and the country. In the former, where persons of distinction are, in the season, as thick as hops, a lord is passed by with complete indifference; and, whether known or not, a journeyman tailor looks at him as a thing of course; but let his lordship walk up the main street of a country town, and all eyes are reverently fixed upon him, and every one he meets steps off the pavement to

give the noble peer a courtly passage and the wall—a jew old clothesman would not do the like in passing through St. James's-square. I was early instructed by my father in the wholesome doctrine of paying a proper respect to my betters; and he enjoined me particularly to bear in mind, that I should give the wall to my superiors—the lawyers, the doctors, the parson of the parish, &c.; as I grew older, however, my father's advice created much difficulty in my mind, as I soon began to make it a questionable point—who were my betters? In our club near the Abbey these sort of questions were often mooted; and so republican were our sentiments, that it was well we went abroad in the world while yet so young. One little circumstance, for instance, destroyed the character of Dick Smith in the opinion of all the sober men of the town: he was a clubbist, and often contended that a stupid Peer was unworthy of respect. Dick had in his eye, when he said this, the Lord of the Manor, who was the only blessing the Peerage bestowed upon us within ten miles of our town. The Earl was rich and mean—unmarried and ignorant—an hereditary counsellor of the crown, one would scarcely take his opinion on a straw. In the house, he has been the creature of every minister of the day, no matter what his principles or measures might be—enough for the Peer, that he voted for the crown, as it is called, and was made Lord Lieutenant of his county. Dick knew this, and never thought well of the Peerage. One day he happened to go into the public room of the Post Office, and there his Lordship stood. Ah, Dick! thou

didst not touch thy hat, or bend thy body to the Earl; and thou wilt never be forgiven. His lordship spoke of it the next day to his steward, one of the lawyers before named:—it soon was whispered through the town, that my friend had thus deported himself; and his assurance and presumption will be remembered for many years to come.

My father, then, Richard Hosier, was one of the five drapers before alluded to, as belonging to the second class. His father and grandfather had been drapers before him, and had actually owned the same house in which I was born: who or what my great great grandfather was, I am totally at a loss to say—all my efforts to that point having hitherto been unavailing: it is not for want of inquiry and research, that I am thus in the dark as to the history of my progenitors; for it is a truth, that from an early age, I have been more than commonly solicitous on the affair; and it is with deep mortification that I am at last compelled to leave a blank for the intermediate descents, and to say, consolingly—

“ A son of Adam and of Eve—

“ Let Bourbon or Nassau go higher!”

My father was always distinguished as a quiet harmless man, who, in the current phrase of the world, seldom injured any one but himself.* He was modest and

* My brother Ned always contended that this was the last person he should have injured.

retiring, and therefore not at all likely to make his way to distinction in his native place.

The greatest honour to which the Hosiers had arrived, (as I heard my father say) was in the person of his uncle Peter, after whom I was christened. This worthy man was Churchwarden of the parish in 1786;—and as he was continually held up to my notice, I can remember many little things relating to him. That he was churchwarden, there can be no doubt, as I once traced his name cut in a stone of the church-yard wall, thus accompanied—

“ This Wall was Rebuilt in the Year,
1786.

Peter Hosier }
Abraham Salt } Churchwardens.”

My uncle Peter lived to a good old age. When I knew him, he was a thick little gentleman, in a dark wig, with a broad-brimmed hat, and a straight brown coat; large buckles in his shoes, and carried a silver-headed cane. He was one of the *warmest* men in the town, but I unfortunately did not benefit by his riches. I have heard my father tell that he often saw him, when in office, distribute the charity bread on a Sunday, and hold the plate on collection-days at the church door. He read the “ Parish Officer’s Guide,” and made notes in the margin: his shopman, (I believe he was a wag, and knew well how to humour the old man) was often honoured by my uncle’s conversation; in return for which he persuaded him that he ought to have been a justice of the peace. By all that I can learn, however,

the churchwarden was a social, kind and gentle soul—an ancestor, of whose integrity we may be proud, if other qualities should be sought for in vain. Had he lived in a corporate town, I have no doubt he would have passed the civic chair, and taken a seat in the Court of Aldermen. The Sunday before his death, which happened rather suddenly at the age of ninety, he took me, then a boy, to the charity school of our town; his zeal in the cause of education was great and lasting; for, as he frequently observed, "Teach the young ones their duty towards God and man, and then if they do not make good members of society, the fault will be their own." As my uncle entered the school room, the boys all rose, and gave him their best bow. I had hold of his hand the while, and felt a secret gratification at the respect which accompanied his life. Going up to the master, he observed, "Well, Jonathan, are they all good boys? I am come to look at you once more—perhaps for the last time." He was right—it was the last time; for on the Sunday following the old man died.

I had never seen death before: it was evening when my uncle called his friends around him: he embraced them according to their age and nearness of relationship. "I am about to die," said he; "I have been blessed through a long life, and thank my God for bringing me to so happy an end." I was the youngest of the party, and therefore received the blessing of my uncle last. He took my hand, and looked anxiously upon me—after a short pause, he faintly uttered these words—"A good conscience and a Saviour—I die in peace." A struggling

hand was in mine—it was the last effort of my uncle Peter.

* * * * *

I had not visited my native town for more than ten years, when I resolved once again to trace the scenes of my boyhood ; a strong feeling had made me long a stranger to them, but that feeling gave way to the desire of climbing in manhood those hills which first met my view, and of gazing again on those romantic scenes which threw an intellectual charm around my earliest days. Other places may be forgotten—other recollections fade away in absence ; but there is something hallowed and steadfast in our first impressions—they will not leave us ; and though they be of grief, and tell of blighted hopes and ruined friendships, a melancholy soothing comes with them, to avert the pain. Even now my heart is full of young associations, and humble in the play-place of my early days—

“That cabin small—

“The lake—the bay—the waterfall—

“And Thee, the spirit of them all.”

When I entered Staffordshire, my straight-forward, regular travelling was at an end. This county abounds with so many interesting spots that, as I had often done before, I could not resist the temptation of wandering over it, and visiting some of those places which are alike rich in scenery and tales of other times : here is St. Thor's Cavern, where the Druids once performed (so says tradition) their murderous rites ; one half-believes

the story that, in elder time, our fellow-creatures were really enclosed in wicker work, and sacrificed as an atonement on the altar of the great idol Thor. I was a boy when an old countryman first told me of the horrid recollections of this spot. He was not satisfied with the usual stories on the subject; but contrived to embellish his account with suitable additions, which I remember well, from their powerful effect on my imagination—"Five hundred young men and boys," said he, "were sacrificed in one day, whose blood was preserved and drank by the Druids of the cavern." It was this same old man who related to me, in his peculiar style of exaggeration, the story of the murder of Sir William Chetwynd, one of the gentlemen ushers of the Seventh Henry, on Tixal Heath.

My old chronicler was driving me across the heath, one summer's evening, and he chose that time for his narration. The historical particulars of this cruel affair are brief. The Chetwynds of Ingestre, and the Stanleys of Pipe, had long been jealous of each other, and their mutual heart-burning was displayed with all that bitterness and rancour which distinguished the feudal times. Sir Humphrey Stanley, it appears, was one of the Body Knights of the King, and had materially contributed in establishing him upon the English throne; the preferment of his enemy and rival, Sir William Chetwynd, however, was a deep source of mortification to him, and at length he formed the horrid resolution of murdering him. We are told that Sir Humphrey thus planned and executed his dreadful purpose. One day he sent a letter to his

rival, in a feigned hand, inviting him to an entertainment at the house of a neighbouring chief. The direction of Sir William, to the mansion of his friend, lay across the heath, and thither he unsuspectingly repaired, without any of his customary attendants. He had no sooner gained the heath, however, before he was surrounded by a score of armed men, who had lain in wait for him, by the orders of Sir Humphrey. These ruffians immediately commenced a murderous attack on their defenceless victim, and slew him on the spot. It is added by local historians, that Sir Humphrey was present at this cowardly murder, having, with his hunting train, come up at the moment, feigning, as a ready excuse, that the chase had accidentally led him that way.

Now this story, as it stands, was not interesting or tragic enough for my old guide—for he solemnly assured me, after pointing out the identical place where the bloody deed was done, that the ill-fated Sir William slew twelve of his murderers before he was subdued himself, and that a few years afterwards, Sir Humphrey Stanley was thrown from his horse while hunting on the very same spot, and broke his neck. Of course I could not doubt the old man's story, and indeed had hardly courage to look up, or speak a single word, till we had safely crossed the heath.

After an absence of so many years, it may be imagined with what delightful feelings I traced in the latter end of Spring, the beautiful scenery (described by Shenstone) which surrounds the seat of the Earl of Stamford, at Euville ; and with what renewed emotions I stood upon

the church tower of Muccleston, on the same spot, perhaps, from whence the ill-starred, but daring Margaret of Anjou, beheld the battle at Blore Heath, which ruined the hopes of her illustrious house.

The poet Drayton has faithfully described the delightful scenery around Tamworth, and because he has done so, I have always read him with a powerful interest. In the hall of the Castle, we are told, there was once a rude delineation of the last battle of one of the Knights of Arthur's Round Table, Sir Launcelot of the Lake, and Sir Tarquin; and I have often regretted that time should have been so malicious as to blot it out.

When I had spent a fortnight in this pleasant rambling way, I came by a circuitous route to Litchfield, intending, without any further delay, to take the first stage for my native town. My Litchfield friends were always proud of their city, and as I had spent some of my youthful days there, I boast of it too. It was the native place of Dr. Johnson, and here he wrote his *Irene*: besides that ornament to the literature of his country, the grammar school is celebrated for having educated a list of illustrious men—as lawyers, for instance, Lord Chief Justice Wilmot, Chief Justice Willes, Lord Chief Baron Parker, Mr. Justice Noel, and Mr. Baron Lloyd.—Bishop Newton, Addison, Hawkins Browne, David Garrick, Bishop Smalridge, Elias Ashmole the Antiquary, the Rev. Theophilus Buckeridge, and George King, the writer on heraldry, were also indebted to Litchfield school for their education.

That accomplished female Miss Anna Seward, died at the Episcopal Palace in 1807 ; all who know her works remember the fondness with which she speaks of the famous willow that flourished near the Close. Dr. Johnson was equally attached to this celebrated tree :— he never visited his native city without making a pilgrimage to the willow, and he says himself, that it was the delight of his “early and waning life.”

This feeling of respect for trees which we have known in boyhood is remarkably general : amongst my friends, I could enumerate many instances of the kind ; and for myself, I can truly say that it would give me deep regret to hear that the old oak near the Abbey had lost a single branch from violence or decay.

“ Be it a weakness—it deserves some praise—
We love the play place of our early days ;
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
The wall on which we tried our graven skill,
The very name we carved subsisting still ;
The bench on which we sat while deep employed,
Tho’ mangled, hacked, and hewed, not yet destroy’d ;
The little ones, unbuttoned, glowing hot,
Playing our games, and on the very spot.”

As I entered a quiet room at the hotel a well-known voice met me at the door with “ Ah ! Peter ! my old friend ! ”

“ What, Tom ! is it you ? ”

“ Indeed it is ! ” he rejoined ; and we pulled each

other's arm most lustily till we reached the middle of the room.

"And what brought you to Litchfield?" said I.

"Oh, I've left that dull, insipid place at last, and am fairly bound for London."

"Well, 'tis a lucky meeting—and we'll not go hence to night: over a quiet bottle, Tom, you can make me acquainted with all that has been done in the old town since my departure from it."

"Why, that's a heavy tax to be sure; and there are some things which I should hardly like to tell, or which you, perhaps, would desire to hear; but only wait till we have dined, and promise not to ask a single question till then, and you may command my tongue as long as you can keep awake."

* * * * *

"Now then, here's *Success to the Members of the old Oak*."

"With all my heart; and I believe, Peter, that I have been the most unlucky of them all—or rather I should say, the most unwise; for, in sober truth, I begin to fall in with your old opinion, that 'our lucky stars' mean little else than prudence and perseverance; so I may as well, perhaps, give you my own history first. After you left the country, my father's affairs gradually grew worse and worse, till the failure of a neighbouring bank completely ruined him—and (as you well know) a commission was taken out against him. At this time I was in the office of Mr. Sharp, to whom I was expected my father would have articulated me. His

sudden failure, however, wholly destroyed my hopes, and I continued in the lawyer's office as a working clerk. This was a source of deep mortification to me, and I was made to feel it every day by the illiberality of Sharp, and the narrow-minded heartlessness of those whom I had known in better fortune. When my prospect of becoming a country attorney was blighted, I soon found that nearly all my former acquaintance were gradually turning away from me—it did not matter, my friend, that by birth, education, and talent, I was their equal, if not their superior.”

“The same good opinion of yourself, Tom, as ever, I find.”

“Yes, and surely it is not overrating one's self, to say thus much. However, I very soon found that I must not hope to move in the same sphere in which I had heretofore been a favourite actor. ‘Poor young man!’ said Woods the surgeon, ‘it is a sad thing for him; but of course it would not be prudent to invite him to our parties.’

“This was the language of men who estimated others only by their purse, or by some of those fortuitous circumstances which conspire to give us the passing respect of the mean and the pitiful. But though I felt these things most deeply, there were other sources of regret to me, of a much more painful nature. I could bear the slighting taunts of little minds, and fondly calculate on the time when I should be revenged; but it went to my soul to see my dearest friends the victims of this same illiberality; they who perhaps could not bear it so

well, and who certainly did not deserve it so much as myself. My poor father was deeply wounded at the treatment he received, and one of the fondest of mothers, unable to bear the reverse of fortune, sunk into the grave with only the love of her husband and her children to succour and support her in the last wretched struggle.

"But, your sister,—is she well?" said I.

"Why, my friend, but for that question, I should have turned away from the gloomy picture, and have been content to ridicule the beings I have learnt to despise. You know, Peter, how much I always loved that gentle girl;—when you saw her last, she was just thirteen, and gave an early promise of becoming an elegant and enlightened woman. Had you known her at twenty, you would indeed have said our hopes had been more than realized; a year or two of sorrow, however, has sadly changed my sister; and the faithlessness of one, who was unworthy of her esteem, has contributed not a little to destroy her peace of mind. Whilst my father was successful in trade, and it was expected that he would give my sister a considerable fortune, she was zealously courted by several of our acquaintance; amongst the number of her admirers, Henry Prestly was the most favoured. You know him, Peter: he is the son of the vulgar old Banker, who, in spite of his mind, merit, and person, became rich, nobody knows how. I have often heard the old fellow boast of the overreaching tricks which have distinguished his commercial life—it is true they were not absolutely

acts of dishonesty, but they were such as none but a mean and sordid spirit could have stooped to. 'I never engaged in an unlucky speculation in my life,' he frequently exclaims; and whenever it is hinted to him that the worthy and meritorious *sometimes* fail—'Pshaw!' says the old Banker, 'don't tell me, nobody ever failed yet, who deserved to succeed.' His wife is almost as coarse a lump of humanity as himself; and so you may judge of the rare example which their son had to follow. He is not quite so bad as his father; but as to liberality and nobleness of nature, it is not to be expected from him. My sister, to our great surprise, fixed her affections upon young Prestly; he had been an intimate of our house from the time of his boyhood, and that perhaps accounts for an attachment which, considering the wide difference between the tastes and sentiments of the parties, would not otherwise have existed. My sister felt the uncongenial nature of his mind, and yet she loved him most devotedly.

"—— Early habits, those false links that bind

"At times the loftiest to the meanest mind."

But to be brief, the attachment was agreeable to all parties, and the period of marriage had been fixed, when the sudden and unlooked-for misfortunes of my father completely changed the intentions of the old Banker and his family. He would no longer consent to the union; and though, to be honest, his son was reluctant to leave my sister, yet he was mean and base enough to be operated upon by others, who at length suc-

ceeded. This pitiful desertion, combined with the sorrows of her home, produced a great and alarming effect upon Harriet's health, and then the young man, repenting of his baseness, renewed the offer of his hand; but he did not know my sister, she had been deceived, and would not trust again to one whose constancy was of so doubtful a complexion. Thank God, she is now recovering; and my poor old father and mother have enough left them to spend the evening of their days in comfortable retirement. It is a low feeling, Peter, but I cannot refrain from expressing the gratification which I feel at the return that old Prestly has received for his calculating and contemptible conduct. About a twelve-month since his son, for whom he had marked out several rich wives, (some of whom the young man did not like, whilst the others did not like him,) despairing perhaps of ever succeeding in the matrimonial trade, absolutely intrigued with a pretty-looking house-maid of his father's, and afterwards married her."

"Well, Tom, indeed one can hardly help rejoicing at the old worldling's disappointment."

"With regard to myself. I did not remain long with Sharp: it was quite evident that he did not like me—in the first place, my manners were too familiar to please him. He possessed all those notions of vulgar consequence which we so often see associated with a country attorney, who can just afford to keep his horse, and wear a coat fine enough for the table of a neighbouring squire. Sharp, therefore, expected from me a proper quantity of respect—but I could not disguise my

feelings, I had the greatest contempt for his littleness of soul, and my conduct unfortunately told the truth. He frequently admonished me that I was by far too independent, adding very considerably, what I felt too powerfully to need being reminded of, that I was poor. In short, my dear friend, I soon became tired of my situation, and resolved to leave the town. But to give you another specimen of the meanness of our native place: it had, as you know, been usual for me to make one at the Annual Christmas Subscription Ball, and the year after my father's failure I took my tickets as usual, little dreaming of the mortification which was in store for me. A day or two before the assembly, however, young Pye, the only son of the old pastrycook, who has grown rich by hard work and close living, called on me at Sharp's, and after taking a seat, and conversing for a little time on general matters, he touched on the forthcoming assembly. I soon discovered from the blockhead's awkwardness and hesitation, that he had something of consequence to communicate on that subject, and I therefore relieved him from a stammering preface, by asking him at once what he was desirous of saying, and requesting him to be quick and brief. 'Why then,' said he, 'I am commissioned to suggest to you the propriety of not attending the Christmas Ball—several of the subscribers spoke of the business last night, and they were unanimous in recommending the suggestion to your prudence—under,' he added, 'the peculiar circumstances of yourself and friends.' Now this was too much for me: my first feeling directed me to throw him out

of the office ; but I governed myself for a few moments, and asked with some earnestness, if he had volunteered to make the communication ? ‘ Why, yes,’ said he, ‘ I did offer to do so.’ ‘ Then,’ I replied, ‘ your folly is equal to your meanness,’ and, I regret to say, that I literally kicked him into the street. One of my early friends had not yet deserted me, and I immediately commissioned him to be the bearer of a challenge to the vulgar son of the pastrycook. To this I received the following answer—‘ That as a gentleman he could not think of meeting an Attorney’s copying clerk.’ At the receipt of this communication I lost all governance of my feelings, and in the evening placed myself in the way of young Pye, and gave him the soundest horse-whipping he ever was honoured with. But for this revenge I paid most dearly—an action for the assault was brought against me, and the Jury found a verdict with ten pounds damages ; and this, with the costs, made me a heavy debtor on my father’s then very straitened purse.

“ But to the ball ; I attended it—and mingled as usual with the grandees of our town. I was however no longer one of them, for I found that nearly all the party cut me in the most marked and insolent manner ; yes, even that idle boy, the son of the very bookseller whose father so foully robbed my family in his character of guardian. I confess that I was deeply mortified at this treatment, and but for one lucky circumstance, the triumph of the vulgar herd would have been complete. At a late hour the son of the old vicar, (our companion, Peter, in the Oak,) entered the ball-room, accompanied

by his lovely sister. That very day he had returned to his family for a short season, and brought with him much honour, and a Major's commission. You may judge of my surprise, and you may imagine the adulation that followed the gentleman and the soldier. It was not till I saw these friends enter, that I wished to leave the assembly—the young soldier greeted me first, with all the warmth of true feeling and friendship, and his sister was, as she always is, superior to the majority of her sex."

"Of course she is, Tom—but go on."

"After conversing with my gallant friend for some time, and making an early appointment with him in the morning, I took my leave, intending to retire; but his sister kindly and playfully took me by the arm, and said, 'Surely, Mr. Harcourt, you will dance with me?' I could estimate the sentiment that spoke more powerfully by her looks than by her tongue, and joined the dance. Neither could I fail to remark the studied particularity of my friend; he danced but little, and with a delicacy that I shall never forget, he chose for his partner my young cousin, who had accompanied me to the assembly, and consequently had shared in my disgrace. In a little time, my friend whispered me: 'Tom, we'll leave together,' and we did so."

"I soon found, as indeed I had suspected, that this hasty visit of my friend, to the ball-room, was made purposely to relieve me from my mortifying situation. I need not say how sweet a friend I have always had in his sister. Ah, there is indeed truth in woman: she

may perchance desert us when we are blessed by the sunshine of prosperity ; but in the trying hour, when difficulties are around our path, then is she more than faithful. But of this another time.

“ I am really ashamed, my friend, to look back upon the last few years of my life : they display so many proofs of intemperance and folly. However, I must go on. My next step was to Edinburgh ; armed with a few introductions to that learned city, I calculated on supporting myself by literary means : this I managed to do for some time tolerably well— but I wanted the most essential requisites for success. I wrote just as the feeling suited,— there was no punctuality in my engagements ; I promised booksellers at night, but forgot the performance in the morning. To be short, I was gay, idle, and dissipated, till at last my debts threw me into prison, from which I have not long been released, by the sacrifices of my friends. However, I am now resolved to reform, and want your aid to improve my character.”

“ You shall have it, Tom, another day ; but there are one or two strange townsmen, of whom I am anxious to learn something. That queer old fellow, Simon Brown, is he alive ?”

“ Yes, and just as strange as ever. He wears the same straight blue coat that he has worn for many years, and that everlasting pair of corduroy inexpressibles may daily be seen walking about our town. He got rich strangely, and in a very short time, so says the story. In his early life he was a starch manufacturer, and was surveyed by a jolly old exciseman, who loved

his bottle. Simon, therefore, took good care to humour him; he fed the king's officer well with the food he liked best, whilst Mrs. Brown, an industrious prudent dame, skilfully managed the starch manufactory; Simon was quite as usefully and rather more pleasantly employed, and of course in a few years he grew rich. By a glance at that quaint character, you may know that he has money in his pocket. It has often occurred to me that such men as old Simon speak, in every look and turn, the despicable and lordly sentence—"I am rich!" And yet I know not why we should rail at such cash-collectors, and set it down as an unpardonable vice for a man to heap together a store of riches. We too commonly say of him—"With the means in his power, he does no good to any mortal being." Granted—and what then? The avaricious only do *that* which the dissipated and ambitious make the constant rule of their conduct: he gives way to his ruling passion, and suffers none of the amiable sympathies of humanity to interfere with the acquisition of riches. He does, indeed, only live for himself and for the gratification of his propensities: to him the greatest pleasure in the world is to find that every year increases the sum total of his wealth; and his highest pride consists in the feeling, that all his neighbours know him to be rich. And what good does it do? Aye, that's another question.—But let us first turn for a moment to the man of extravagance and pleasure. Is there any virtue in his careless squandering of money? Or any true liberality in the unheeding and

indiscriminate application of his means? Certainly not. The avaricious man is induced to keep his purse strings tightened from the inordinate affection that he places upon gold—from the feeling long cherished that leads him at all times to value it over much, whilst his opposite neighbour takes no care at all of the blessings of wealth. He squanders, because he cannot estimate, and is liberal only for the gratification of his folly and his crimes. They are alike the slaves of their passions, and alike are they heartlessly enthralled in the bonds of their vices. There is no difference in principle between the man who spends his paternal estate in a round of folly and self-gratification, and that narrow-souled and purse-proud being, whose sole ambition was to have it written on his tomb—

“ Here lies———

“ Who died worth three hundred thousand pounds.”

Now Simon Brown was of the latter class. The last time I saw him was at a Petty Sessions, when the Magistrates were busily engaged at hearing and discharging Insolvent Debtors. Simon sat near their worships, and looked and felt that money made his old brown wig—uncomely as it was—a not unwelcome visitor. The first unfortunate that claimed his discharge was the very man whose groom Simon had been not forty years before: misfortunes and the folly of his children had brought this grey-headed applicant thus to appeal for relief: but though reduced to poverty

he was still unsubdued in mind; he was not bowed down with unavailing sorrow, or led to murmur at the dispensations of Providence. Meek-hearted and pious old man! I never dropped a purer tear than when I thus saw thee (beggared in circumstance) but rich in spirit, bow with calmness to the rod that so heavily afflicted thee! At this moment too I could not refrain from looking inquisitively towards old Simon—did *he* feel no pang—no sympathy, for one whom he had known in such better fortune? I marked his features well, not a muscle changed—his hurried eye looked with the same cold unliquid glance that it was wont to give; and the only expression to be traced in his barren features was this—“Well! *I’m* not insolvent.” And I could imagine him flipping his fingers in an unconcerned and vulgar manner, as he often did when the consciousness of his money came across him. It is indeed true, my friend, as Cowper writes:—

“Riches are passed away from hand to hand,
“As fortunes, vice, or folly may command;
“As in a dance the pair that take the lead,
“Turn downward, and the lowest pair succeed.”

And his old master is reduced to beggary! Well, what strange havoc a few years has made in so small a circle. We see, Tom, that the goods of time are held by an uncertain tenure, and that after all, this life is but a vain and fretful struggle for a fleeting store of fame and fortune. Surely then it is wise to look

within our hearts, and lay up a treasure *there* which shall be taken away. This, I know, may be called by the sneering name of cant and fanaticism—but let us, my friend, in journeying through life, endeavour to make an interest with that God who will continue faithful to the end. And then, if friends should prove deceitful, if hearts on which we trusted become cold and thankless, and fortune, as she often does, turn from our homes and leave them drear and desolate—oh, yet there will be a comfort left, a balm for the wounded heart, and riches that the worldly man hath not known how to estimate.

“ Oh, thou, who driest the mourner’s tear,

“ How dark this world would be,

“ If when deceived and wounded here,

“ We could not fly to thee.”

[A few sketches follow in the original MS. which, in deference to the opinion of a valued friend, are omitted in this volume—it was feared, that if published, one or two of the likenesses might have been recognised in a country town, and have produced a painful feeling.]

FANNY WEST.

FANNY WEST.

" No man inveighs against the wither'd flower,
" But chides rough winter, that the flower has kill'd ;
" Nor that's devour'd, but that which doth devour,
" Is worthy blame ; O, let it not be hid
" Poor women's faults, that they are so fulfill'd
" With men's abuses ; those proud Lords to blame,
" Make weak-made women tenants to their shame."

SHAKESPEARE.

How many circumstances there are in every day's experience from which we may read reproof lessons ! Tired of my books, which at times I turn from with a singular antipathy, and finding nothing in my solitary apartment that could soothe the restlessness of my mind, I carelessly took my hat and strolled into the crowded streets of the metropolis. Nothing quiets me so soon as the noise of a populous city, and it rarely happens that I do not return to my room contemplative and composed after such a ramble.

I had passed through several streets, and bent my way towards Hyde Park, a spot which I like to visit best on a cool evening in summer, for then it is not

crowded with fashion, and one may almost forget that a few steps only lead to a populous city.

A fine female, unattended, entered the Park at the same instant with myself: I thought her beautiful, and could not resist the temptation of approaching her. She was indeed an elegant woman, and there was an inexpressible charm and intelligence in her countenance that commanded the most respectful conduct from me. I soon found by her conversation that she had moved in superior society, and that her mind was worthy of an exalted station. I had left my apartments in a meditating mood, and this adventure somewhat unaccountably led to a long train of reflection, on the shame and sorrow that await the wretched woman who, in an unguarded hour—yielding, perhaps, to the artful baseness of one on whom she has fondly and fatally confided, falls from the high estate of virtue, and has nothing left her in this world but to pursue the unthinking round of heartless crime, or steal in silence sorrowful and repenting to the tomb. Alas! that there should be no return for woman to the bosom of pure associations—let her but once fall, and the door of forgiveness in this world is closed; she may repent with tears that may wash the record of her guilt from the book of Heaven; but the finger of scorn, and the unpitying tongue, will never cease to follow her on earth.

The captivating manners and intelligent conversation of my accidental companion soon inspired other feelings than those with which I first addressed her. There was a tinge of melancholy in her appearance,

which had so much the character of truth, that, (though too well acquainted with the errors of our nature) I could not but believe that the desolate woman secretly and earnestly mourned at her degraded state.

“ Alas! the love of woman—it is known

“ To be a lovely and a fearful thing,

“ For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,

“ And if 'tis lost, life has no more to bring

“ For them, but mockery of the past alone.”

As we passed from the Park, and directed our way towards Portman-square, our conversation became gradually more interesting to each other, and it was free from all that levity and guilt which the situation of my companion might have induced. In a street leading out of the square the young female resided. Her apartments were extremely neat and elegant: they strongly evidenced the taste of their possessor, and furnished me with another proof that she could not be a willing and abandoned votary of crime. Her education, it was evident, as far, at least, as the elegant acquirements were concerned, had been carefully attended to; and when she conversed with me in the soft mild language of Italy, and sang some of its sweetest songs to her own music, I silently regretted more than ever that so much beauty and talent should have been blighted in its early day by the withering breath of guilt. Here was a being (I thought) who might have given life and joy to a happy circle—who might have blessed her parents' lengthened day, and closed their eyes at last with the proud and affectionate thought, that she had not dis-

graced their name ; and now, perhaps, she was abandoned by her family, or had brought down in sorrow to an early grave the fond mother who had given her birth, or the too confiding father who had so often wept over her in affection. I became somewhat anxious to know the real name of my companion, and I could have wished that through that knowledge the unhappy female might be restored to her friends, and saved from the utter degradation and distress that ultimately wait on crime. But it was in vain that I delicately questioned her as to the country of her friends, or tried by every art to extract any circumstance from her which might serve me in the progress of inquiry. She cautiously evaded my questions, and only once alluded to her home : then I observed a tear stand in her fine eye, and in the deepest agitation she suffered a painful expression to escape her lips—" I have broken a mother's heart, and my poor father ! I must never see him more."

" Though man may cover crimes with bold stern looks,

" Poor women's faces are their own fault's books."

When she least expected it, however, my curiosity was most painfully set at rest. In looking over a collection of drawings, I accidentally turned to one which was well known to me, and I instantly exclaimed, for a strange light came upon me, " Good God ! it is my brother's portrait !" I hastily turned to my unhappy friend, whom I had known so well in youth, but she could not explain, her feelings were overpowered, and

She sunk on my arm in a state of insensibility. This circumstance brought the servant to my assistance, and shortly afterwards a sweet boy came anxiously running into the room, and in the most affectionate manner, just articulated, "Oh, my dear mamma." I thought I could recognise the features of my brother in the child, but it was not then a time for enquiry, and as soon as poor Fanny West had recovered, I gave her my card, and promised to call on the morrow. I did so, and the following short narrative will best explain her unfortunate history.

Fanny was the daughter of a country gentleman of small fortune, who resided but a few miles from my father's house. Being an only child, she was the object of unbounded solicitude on the part of her parents, who loved her with the most devoted fondness, and unfortunately suffered that love to lead them to forget the important interests of their child. Instead of being early taught the sacred dictates of duty—of being impressed with the necessity of governing the passions and regulating the affections, she was suffered from earliest infancy to go free from restraint, and to know no other duty but her will. The task is difficult enough, even when commenced in season, to discipline the unruly and untoward spirit, and by carefully watching the first inclinations of the mind, to lead it gently into the path of wisdom and virtue, which is indeed the only path of peace.

Mr. West was a man not at all calculated to give a right direction to his daughter's mind. He was not

blessed with any particular talent, but passed amongst the multitude as a well-disposed, respectable person, such a one as we may imagine a country gentleman to be, who farms a good portion of his own land, hunts in the season, and shoots when the weather permits—reads the country paper once a week, and sometimes, when plagued with the geography of the world, looks into “Brookes’s Gazetteer.” I believe the reading of Mr. West did not extend much beyond this, and his lady was quite a congenial companion: her ideas were few and limited to the narrow sphere in which she had moved. Their daughter, on the contrary, was highly gifted by nature, and the liberal education she received was not lost upon her. But there was one point in which she had been neglected, and to that omission she has often in after life attributed much of the sorrow that so soon began to settle over her path. In matters of morality, Mr. West was scrupulously exact: he bore the character, and deserved it well, of being truly honest and correct in all his worldly transactions. “If a man (I have frequently heard him say) will not be honest for honesty’s own sake, nothing else can make him so—religion will only teach such a being to dress up his knavery with the semblance of something fair and pious.” Believing that nothing else was required of man than to pass quietly through life, to dream away, as it were, his short measure of years, and enjoy the cup of present pleasure to the full; he never thought of instilling into his child those wholesome doctrines of rational religion which serve so highly to increase the

comforts of our days by presenting us at all times with a light, a guide, and counsellor. Above all, it is necessary, even as far as worldly considerations are involved—upon the principle of expediency alone, that the female mind should be early taught the beauty of holiness, and have constantly inculcated the dangers with which she will be surrounded, and be directed to look up to that arm of strength which alone can preserve her in virtue, and support her in honour to the end. Man, it is too true, may riot in excess of vice and folly; he may daily live in the disregard of almost every moral and religious duty, and yet society will receive him without a blush or a sneer; his crimes are qualified by the milder name of *follies*, and his less prominent vices are only viewed as the eccentricities of wayward youth: nay, it is almost a question whether the man of gallantry and dissipation is not frequently received with more courtesy and distinction than his less obtrusive, but far more honourable fellow.

I knew Fanny well when she was full of youth and innocence, and beauty; she was, indeed, at eighteen, one of the loveliest of her sex to look upon, and her sweet and winning temper made her beloved by all. At this time my elder brother who had entered a cavalry regiment at an early age, paid us rather a long visit previous to his embarkation for the Peninsula. He was a young man of a turbulent but noble disposition; one of those whose indiscretions belong peculiarly to their passions, who have not ballast enough to sail calmly over the turbulent wave of life. It was natural

that this passing visit of our brother should be a season of interest and pleasure, not unmingled with sensations of a deep and painful nature, the dangers to which he would ere long be exposed could not fail to produce a powerful effect on friends who loved him most devotedly. If father, brothers, dreamt of glory, and forgot the toils and privations of the soldier, when they reflected on the nobleness of his profession, there were others to whose kind hearts those dangers were ever present, and who almost forgot the glory in their painful solicitude for a son, a brother, whom they loved so well.

Before my brother commenced his military life, he had shewn a great regard at all times for Fanny, and as they grew up together it was evident that there existed a mutual passion of the tenderest kind. Although the two families had been so long united in the bonds of friendship, Mr. West, as soon as he discovered the feelings of his daughter, took every possible means to prevent this early fondness from ripening into a deeper passion. In this he was not successful, and on my brother's visit to his home, the intercourse between him and the object of his first affection was renewed with all that enthusiasm which his profession and the circumstances under which they met, were calculated to inspire.

A few days before his leave of absence expired, the young soldier declared to Mr. West his affection for Fanny, and solicited permission to correspond with her in absence, and if Providence should spare him in

the war, and suffer him to return again to his country, that then he might make her his wife. The old man, however, was inexorable—he refused the request, and nothing could induce him to alter his resolution. Fanny was instantly conveyed to the house of a friend at some distance, and every precaution was used to prevent the visit of my brother. Only a few days remained, and Mr. West trusted that absence and other society would soon efface from his daughter's mind the remembrance of a poor soldier. This was an unfortunate step. The unfeeling conduct of the father, and the imprudence of his child, what a weight of sorrow have they not produced!

The night before Fanny was conveyed from her father's house she learnt the intentions of her friends, and informed her lover of the circumstance. It was immediately resolved to defeat the wishes of her father, and when strongly urged by my brother, she forgot the indiscretion into which she was hurrying, and consented to elope with him from the house of her friend, and marry him at Plymouth on the very day of his arrival there for embarkation. He on his part took every precaution for their speedy and honourable union; a near relative who resided at his vicarage, not far from the town, being engaged to perform the ceremony on the morning of their reaching the village. By an unavoidable accident, however, the consummation of their anxious wishes was delayed for a day, and in the meantime an unfortunate circumstance occurred, which spread grief through our families, and made her whom

we all loved as a sister a melancholy object of shame and sorrow.

The preparations for the embarkation of the army were continued at this time with the greatest earnestness, and orders had been given by the Government for the troops to sail from the British shores at the shortest notice. My brother's baggage was on ship-board, and on the evening before the day of his appointed marriage, in company with Fanny and his friend who was to unite them in the morning, he visited the ship destined to convey him to the Peninsula. The party were together on the deck, admiring, in silent wonder, now and then broken by the kind prayer of female love, the glorious ocean, crowded around them with embattled spires, which seemed all calmly waiting for the word to ride upon the distant wave, and waft the flower of English youth to battle on a foreign soil. It may be imagined how anxiously, at such a moment, the fond confiding heart of woman throbbed as she thought upon a husband's fate, and threw a hurried look—

“O'er the glad waters of the dark blue sea.”

They were preparing to leave the ship when the Captain approached my brother, and taking him aside, informed him that his orders were to sail that moment. It was in vain to think of any thing but duty; and painful as the circumstances were, it was impossible for the young soldier to leave the vessel; he therefore disguised his feelings, and leading Fanny and his friend to the

boat, told them that he was compelled to stay on board for an hour or two on military business, but would join them soon. The boat suddenly bore away from the vessel's side, and scarcely had it reached the shore when the fleet stood out for sea. Letters from my brother followed the object of his affection, and explained the unlooked-for circumstance that hurried him away; but the renewed assurances of his devotion could not bring peace to her unhappy bosom; she felt in a moment all the sorrows of her situation, and mourned to think of the imprudent act which had produced them. Unhappy woman!—surely if error ever could be sinless, such was thine.

A few days after my brother's departure, Mr. West came to the vicarage of our friend, and the ill-fated Fanny was soon removed to her father's home. But the tongue of slander had already attacked her character, and those parents to whom she was more than dear saw thus early, by one imprudent step, the flower of their house torn and withered. Neither did my brother's name escape without animadversion and reproach; the sudden departure of the fleet was spoken of as a matter of which he was well informed, and those very circumstances which arose out of his best affection—even the fact of Fanny being on board on the evening of his departure—every thing, indeed, was spoken of and blackened by the busy tongue of malevolence. Nor did Providence permit my brother to return to his country, and prove the rectitude of his heart and the constancy of his affection. In the first

engagement of his regiment on the fields of Spain, he received a severe sabre wound, of which he lingered several weeks, and then honourably closed his brief but not inglorious career. During his last illness he wrote me a minute detail of every circumstance connected with his elopement, and uniformly spoke of Fanny with a delicacy and affection the most sincere and ardent.

“ Young heads are giddy, and young hearts are warm,
“ And make mistakes for manhood to reform.”

Alas! that my poor brother had been allowed a season for this reformation!—that he had even been permitted to restore the honour of a name which his intemperance and folly had so deeply stained!

His last letter (as appeared by its date) was short, but delicately expressive of fears which were too well founded. It ran thus :—

“ MY DEAR NED,

“ God only knows, but I feel that this is the last letter I shall ever write. I enclose one for Fanny; give it her, my dear brother, and tell her that with my last breath I shall pray for her happiness. But oh, there is a thought, a fear, that I am almost ashamed to write,—my heart sickens within me when I reflect on the grief and shame which my imprudence hath brought upon one whom I love more than life. To you I leave her in charge, comfort her with a brother's care, and shield her from the reproaches of an unkind world; for

she is indeed free from even the charge of imprudence—the fault was mine.

“There is only one thing more that I have to write. From my previous communication you will be acquainted with my fears for the situation of Fanny, and her last letter, I am grieved to think, almost confirms those fears. In whatever situation, then, however delicate, she may be placed, I rely firmly upon your faithfulness towards her, and that thought, my dear Ned, cheers me now that I find my strength departing, and a dimness, surely it is that of death coming over me. Farewell,

“Your af—————”

This letter was not concluded, and I learnt from Captain Howard, to whose care the packet was consigned, that my poor brother's strength suddenly left him whilst he was writing, the pen fell from his hand, and he was supported in his last moments by the officer just named, whose friendship for the youth was sincere and lasting. The Captain has often described to me the last moments of his friend, whose anxiety for Fanny was powerfully expressed. His parting words, when a slight delirium came over his mind—were—“Come to me, Fanny, my sweet wife! they shall not hurt thee.”

Mrs. West soon became acquainted with the melancholy situation of her daughter, who ere long would probably become an unhappy mother. The discovery literally broke the old lady's heart; she survived the

shock but a few weeks, and died in the arms of her child, lamenting her dishonour.

Fanny was soon afterwards removed from her father's house to that of a relative near the metropolis, where in grief she gave birth to a son. Mr. West never forgave his child, though he loved her with the strongest affection; still even when her life was despaired of, he was inexorable—he prayed for her death, but nothing could induce him to see the being who had disgraced his name.

For several months Fanny resided with her aunt, and was treated with great kindness; but the old lady suddenly changed in her behaviour, and the unfortunate young female was compelled to leave the house of her relative, and seek alone for a place where, unknown and secluded, she might pass her melancholy days. Coming to the metropolis, she took the apartments that first met her attention, and it was there that I discovered her retreat. She had taken every precaution to prevent her friends from learning her fate, and though her means of living were exhausted, she resolved never again to apply to her family for aid. In this distressing situation, chance threw me in her company, she had left her room sorrowful and bewildered, and was almost tempted to resort to crime for the support of herself and child. At this moment Providence guided me towards her; and as my brother had unthinkingly destroyed her peace and virtue, it was reserved for me to save her from deeper sin, and to maintain her in

the path of rectitude. From my heart I rejoice to think that I was permitted to be the humble instrument of thus protecting the victim of too weak a heart, at the very instant when that protection saved her from the deepest crime, and led the way to years of comfort which she could not otherwise have enjoyed.

The most particular circumstances connected with Fanny's history had been communicated by my brother to Captain Howard, who on his arrival in England immediately hastened to fulfil the dying request of his friend.

I was present when Fanny received the Captain—the meeting was a most painful one, and even the soldier dropped a tear when he beheld the youthful mother weeping over her child at the mention of its father's name. After a moment's pause, the Captain drew from his breast a small urn, and presenting it to Fanny, gently took her by the hand, and said, “Unhappy lady, you are not sullied by crime! look upon one who will protect you, and be a father to your boy!” She could not reply to these endearing words, but falling on her knees she blessed, in a wild and hurried tone, the noble friend of him who was her husband in all but name. A day or two before my brother's death, he extracted a solemn promise from his friend that he would cause his heart to be preserved, and delivered into the hands of Fanny, as a last proof of his undying love. The execution of this request laid the foundation of an attachment between the Captain and Fanny, which soon produced a union, that restored in some degree her

tarnished honour, and gave her many years of de-
felicity. This fortunate event led to a reconcil-
with Mr. West, who was cheered in his declining
by the love of his daughter and her affectionate
But there was one cloud that always settled on
happiness, and subdued the joys of her home
could never forget that by the errors of her youth
had broken the heart of her mother.

INTRODUCTION TO LONDON.



INTRODUCTION TO LONDON.

" Whence, and what are we? to what end ordain'd,
" What means the drama by the world sustain'd ;
" Business or vain amusement, care or mirth,
" Divide the frail inhabitants of earth."

A YOUNG man who has passed the first twenty years of his life in the country, in the midst of its monotony and simplicity of manners, has indeed much to learn and to unlearn on his first introduction to the metropolis. Perhaps he was the poet of a country town, and was consequently known as such to all his neighbours: in this case the effusions of his muse were now and then published in the county newspaper, and his name at the end of his rhyme told who the genius was that claimed the reader's praise. Or let him be any thing else than a poet—the first scholar or the best fiddler, for example: he knows of none greater or more celebrated than himself, and walks his local round with the full

consciousness of being the object of admiration, and equally satisfied that he richly deserves to be so.

I need hardly say how soon our young friend discovers his mistake. I speak from experience on this point; remembering, as I always must, that when a boy, some twenty years ago, I was myself the object of much notice in a circle of about a dozen miles: and in the estimation of a public composed of nearly as many hundreds, I was set down as a youth of genius. Literally was I made giddy with the reputation that so early waited upon me—a brilliant career gave beauty to the perspective, and it is a sober truth that when arrived at years of manhood, and making up my mind to embark upon the world, I considered that it was only for me to leave my native place, and thriving was reduced to a certainty. A kind old gentleman contributed materially to the growth of this awkward mistake—he professed himself the friend of merit—and *therefore* he encouraged me in my poetical propensities. He talked to me of the “*poeta nascitur non fit*,” and told me I had only to study the best models of composition to become “an ornament to the age.” I did study the best models, but am not aware that I have yet become an ornament to the age, or to any thing else.

When my time for leaving the country arrived, I very confidentially wrote to several distinguished persons, and offered myself to their notice—in my honest simplicity, I even relied upon being well provided for by the minister of the day, and wrote to him accordingly. Nor was it till I had received several cooling

answers to my various applications, that it slightly occurred to me, "I may, perhaps, be a little mistaken." But still there was the old gentleman whom I first alluded to—I knew that he had made a fortune in London, and I felt assured, (indeed, that point I had settled long before,) he did not possess half so much talent as myself. A letter to him, then, could not fail of success, and the reason of my not applying to him earlier was, a fear on my part that his interest was not good enough to procure me any thing worthy of my acknowledged talent. However, as a last resort, I wrote to him, and confidently looked to the result, but thus ran his answer :

"DEAR SIR,

"I should ill deserve the opinion you entertain of me if for an instant I could deceive you with the hope of being able to render you the service you stand in need of. Thirty or forty years past I possessed a little interest, but now, after having as it were taken leave of the world so many years, my interest is entirely decayed. With the talent and principles you possess, however, I have little doubt but you may secure friends in the metropolis who will set the wheel of your prosperity in motion: London was the cradle of *my* prosperity, and in my time, merit never sought patronage in vain.

"Your sincere well-wisher,

"ALEXANDER TWIFIG."

“ Well, (thought I,) then the wheel of my prosperity is not to be set in motion by you.” But I was not yet well enough acquainted with the world to see the full drift of the old merchant’s letter, and the oblique sort of compliment which he paid me, was a sufficient consolation for the loss of an expectant place. So I left the country, and set out for the metropolis, provided with various letters to men of distinction in town, from which I laid it down as certain something worth having would yet be sure to spring. These letters were duly delivered, and that is all I ever heard about them. Thus in a very short time, I was fully convinced how little was to be gained by patronage, and I also learnt, amongst other things,

“ How much a dunce that has been sent to roam,
“ Excels a dunce that has been kept at home.”

But I rejoice to think that this unlucky entrance into life had no bad effect upon my energy and determination: it was only learning at first and all at once, truths which might have disturbed me more if the knowledge of them had been gradually acquired; if, for instance, I had been lulled into fancied security for a time, and then have been awakened, too late in the day to profit by the blessing of sight. As it was, however, I took resolution from my ill-fortune, played at chances successfully with the world, and by dint of industry and a careful cultivation of my abilities, have learnt to laugh

at patronage, and am free from the painful trouble of thanking friends.

But it is not my own *Introduction to Town* that I am about to describe—it is that of my young friend NED M'NEIL. His father was an Irish gentleman of good family, who was proud of his country, and of his long line of ancestors. His estate in the county Kerry, on which he constantly resided, was small; and he found himself at the age of forty with an income of eight hundred pounds a-year, and blessed with six sons and three daughters. It may be easily imagined that he had quite enough to do to support his family in respectability, and give them an education suitable to their rank in society. Young M'Neil was a lad of parts: he acquitted himself very satisfactorily at school, and worked his way through Trinity College in a manner that inspired his friends with sanguine expectations of future success.

At twenty-two he left Dublin for the English metropolis, and entered himself as a member of Gray's Inn. It might have been truly said that my young friend had a clear stage on which to exert his abilities—he had no money, few friends, and a large stock of hereditary pride: besides the latter quality, he was altogether prepossessing in his appearance: he was not so nationally Irish as many of his young countrymen, and at the same time possessed a sufficient quantity of that enthusiasm and animal spirit which form so striking a contrast to the measured and Celtic habits of the young men of England. He was, indeed, a gentleman of whom an old friend observed on a first introduction

—"He's light enough to sail down the stream, and yet does not want ballast." This was his true character, and the young ladies might with equal truth say of him in a ball-room—

"A just deportment—manners graced with ease,

"Elegant phrase, and figure form'd to please."

He had, therefore, qualities both of mind and person which very frequently stand well in the place of fortune, and turn to excellent account as marketable commodities.

My young friend, when I knew him first, was full of enthusiasm and fine feeling, which, indeed, amounted at times to something like romance; this, however, may be easily accounted for, by turning to the wild and beautiful scenery, in the solitude of which his earliest impressions were received, and his youthful feelings fondly nursed. His father's house is not far from that fine lake which is the pride of Kerry, and the admiration of all travellers; it is perhaps not exceeded in beauty by any piece of water in the world, and I shall never forget the sensations it inspired when first I gazed upon its rude magnificence.

On the evening of my arrival at the mansion of my friend, I was taken to Killarney: two pleasant companions accompanied me thither, young M'Neil and his eldest sister, whose sweet smile and highly cultivated mind might have produced a powerful effect even when aided by scenery less congenial than that

around her native dwelling. After leading me by a circuitous route through an extent of noble wood, my fair companion suddenly stepped before me, and with a tone and manner that denoted her admiration, exclaimed, "There's the Lake."

The sun was going down, and the face of the water was covered with alternate lights and shadows of the most picturesque and romantic description : here a number of weeping willows overlooked the stream, and there a wide breadth of foliage threw its fantastic shades over the bosom of the Lake, upon which a few small boats were resting, and appeared as if in gentle motion amongst wood and water. The lake is completely encompassed by lofty hills, (or rather mountains,) with rocks and precipices scattered around in rude variety, down to the very margin of the water; and almost from their summits the hills are covered with the richest wood, luxuriantly intermixed with a profusion of evergreens. Nature, indeed, with one continued range of verdant mountains, has encircled these romantic waters, as if to keep them in their quiet bed, that they might repose in stillness and beauty.

Not far from the lake are a great number of delightful villas, which materially contribute to the general effect; and the remains of the old abbey in the neighbourhood give to the picture its last touch, and make it impressively perfect.

This was the place in which my young friend was cradled, and surely his enthusiasm may be forgiven.

After landing at Holyhead, young M'Neil made the

best of his way to the English metropolis, and I have often heard him say that the night coach which first brought him on his journey afforded him an opportunity of remarking the peculiarity of English manners. A stage coach I have always found to be a strange thing—it is perfectly a chance, whether you are made very pleasant, or very much the reverse: there is seldom any medium—and the weather has a powerful influence in the matter. My friend took an inside place—it was winter—a clear cold night; and the coachman cried—“all right behind?” exactly at twelve o’clock. There were six outside passengers—three before, and the remainder bringing up the rear with the guard. Within my friend and an elderly gentleman and two ladies; took their seats, and made the windows carefully fast in order to keep the frost from their teeth. M’Neil settled himself with his back to the horses just as the coach was starting.

“Cold night, ladies,” observed the veteran, as he pulled a Welch wig from his pocket, and deposited his brains in it. “I shall take a nap.”

“Never can sleep in a coach, Sir,” said the shrill voice of a lady—“and I’m afraid the gentlemen singing outside will disturb you.”—

“Not at all, madam,—used to travelling—always carry my wig with me, hope you’ll follow my example,” and it was not long before he loudly serenaded us with his nasal music.

The merriest part of a stage coach is that under the immediate command of the guard—this gentleman is

generally a pleasant fellow—full of anecdote, and seasoned jokes—his very horn gives him a degree of consequence, and there is an exquisite touch of cunning importance in his familiar nodding to the fair eyes that meet him in his journey. He boasts of having a girl at every stage—and has almost as many intrigues on his hands as a half-pay officer who lodges at St. Pancras, or Pentonville. I remember when a boy, being highly delighted with a merry man of this profession—to whose care I was committed, by my father, for safe conveyance to and from school, at holiday times. The old gentleman always directed that I should be safely packed in the inside; but I as invariably found means to take my seat behind; and often have I feigned illness, and declared I could not travel shut up in the stage, for no other reason than to be delighted with the jokes and pleasant stories of John the civil guard. Now he of the stage from Holyhead was just this sort of character; and three congenial spirits had taken their places near him: a sailor, a game-keeper, and a student of Christ Church. This goodly party formed a striking contrast to that which occupied the front of the stage under the presidency of the coachman: the latter was made up of an elderly female, a grave looking, square-toed sort of man in a decent suit of black, and a dark brown great coat. On the coach-box sat a stout young man, who often travelled the road at night, for no other earthly reason than to gratify his peculiar taste for driving—his friends had given him a good education, and he was nominally a member of a learned profession; but his

propensity for "the road" was, as he contended, unconquerable. He certainly drove well, and the coachman, with whom he was in constant discussion during the journey, on the relative advantages of the long and short-rein, and other matters of "the driving science," declared, with an expressive turn of the head, as he pulled up to change horses—"That there's as pretty a whip as ever mounted a box!" The coachman and the amateur being thus engaged, the elderly lady and the gentleman in black were left to themselves on the front of the coach; but they did not seem very anxious to cultivate a familiar acquaintance with each other, for very rarely indeed did they endeavour to chase away the night by any pleasant conversation;—once or twice, however, the gentleman was heard to rail against the age, and to hint slightly at the levity of his fellow travellers behind him;—once, too, in passing a village church he muttered something about the regular clergy, which seemed to stir up his fair companion's gall, for she cried out rather hastily—"O faith, is it that you mane? And a'n't I been cook for these twenty years to as sweet-souled a priest, man, as ever grew into a dean; you're a methodist, sure, and I wont hear the Church of my master abused, though, faith, I'm a Catholic bred up and born."

It was not long after the old gentleman had deposited his brains in the welch wig, and begun to snore, as we have before heard, when the shrill-voiced old lady, who "never could close her eyes in a coach," fell into the most delightful and dreamy slumber. In the

meantime M'Neil, and the young lady were wide awake, and naturally enough chatted away the midnight miles as pleasantly as they could. It was not long before they were on easy terms with each other; for, in truth, a stage coach is by no means an unsocial place:—the very fact, of two young persons being whirled along in the same vehicle, and deriving pleasure or pain from the same passing circumstances, naturally enough creates a union and harmony of thinking, which in the ordinary associations of life are seldom produced. Perhaps being on board a small vessel is even much better for my pleasant purpose: and were I to recommend a course that would readily set two young hearts in the way of knowing each other, I think it would be that they should sail in the light skiff together, and have the opportunity of contemplating in unison the varied face of ocean, and of being moved by the like hopes and fears, till the common object of their anticipation, the foreign strand, was safely reached. At such a time, the mind will shew itself, and the real feelings of the heart are sure to be called into action. Pass through the formal crowd, and you may be *unknown*; mingle in the artificial round of gaiety, and the soul may never break through the courtly drapery that fashion throws around it. But scenes like those I have described, divest us of our worldly selves; and when we least suspect it, show us as we really are.

The day began to break over the neighbouring hills; and M'Neil and his fair companion were yet greeted

now and then with the nasal note of their fellow travellers. The company on the roof of the stage, too, had become tranquil—a favourite line of an old song from the half-slumbering admirers of the guard was occasionally relieved by a deep yawn from the gentleman in black—all else was calm upon the roof.

By favour of the growing light that broke into the coach window, M'Neil saw distinctly, for the first time the countenance of his young companion. He had pictured to himself, during the night, what sort of a creature she must be, and at length fancied, as her society gradually became more interesting, that the morning would shew him a fine and beautiful woman. And in this he was not disappointed. It is always pleasant to look upon an elegant and accomplished female ; but doubly so when her mind has heralded her person, and created a deep and anxious interest in her behalf.

Confusion, says a friend, upon the look of a sweet woman : it is more perplexing than every thing else in the world : it will hardly permit you to conclude a sentence without throwing your very words into disorder, and spoiling the wisest saying. We have all felt the truth of this no doubt : for myself I am free to acknowledge that I find it difficult to look in a fair face for the space of a few seconds without breaking into a confused sort of stammering ; for this reason I generally contrive to begin an address to a young lady without catching her eye, (or as the lawyers would say, without having the

ear of the Bench,) but no sooner does she favour me with an attentive glance, than I fall into an awkward hesitation, and murder the remainder of my speech.

M'Neil had chatted freely with the lady till the light had shewn him her countenance ; but it was now necessary that glances should be exchanged whenever he addressed her, and therefore his eloquence was put to flight : he no longer said pleasant or sensible things, for her eyes prevented him from thinking long together on any other object but themselves : accordingly the round of common-place questions succeeded rational and somewhat learned chat, and the companions who were so unreserved before they saw one another's face in the day-light, retrograded amazingly in the path of sociability : they were now very polite, and therefore very formal.

"Are you going far by the stage, madam?" said M'Neil ; he never dreamt of this question before.

"To London, Sir," replied the lady, "and you are going there, I believe." She had heard him say so to the coachman as he was about to take his seat the night before.

"I rejoice to think we shall travel together to the end of the journey," rejoined M'Neil ; and he had scarcely uttered the words, when the elderly gentleman's confused stare on awaking from his slumbers, put an end to the conversation. The old man had slept away all knowledge of time and space ; and it was therefore natural enough that he should put his Welch wig out of the window, and exclaim as he

did: "Guard! where are *we*?" "In the coach, to be sure," vociferated the Sailor; and the attempt at a joke, was heartily relished by his companions, whose loud laugh announced for the first time that all was merriment over head. The enquirer hastily drew himself back into his seat, and muttering "you brute!" was silent and sulky for the remainder of the journey.

When the stage had arrived within a mile or two of London, it was met by a gentleman's carriage, which pulled up at a little distance from the road; the two ladies prepared to leave the coach, and the youngest, as she rested on M'Neil's arm, said—"Here, Sir, we shall leave you." There was nothing very particular in these words, but the tone in which they were uttered was a kind one, and Moore has beautifully described it, where he sings—

"Oh, there are looks and tones that dart
An instant sunshine through the heart;
As if the soul that minute caught
A something it through life had sought;
As if the very lips and eyes,
Predestined to have all our sighs,
And never be forgot again,
Sparkled and spoke before us then."

Bob handed his fellow travellers into their carriage, and pursued his journey to town, thinking all the way of her whom he had left so lately, and speculating upon the probability of his ever meeting her again.

But he was now in London; the world was before him, and he had to make his own way in it; about fifty pounds, and a few letters of introduction, comprised

his present means ; two or three of these letters were to Trinity College men, adventurers like himself, who had been lucky enough to gain a footing in the literary world, and by the possession of more "tact" than talent, contrived to live like gentlemen. My friend's great hopes of success were on the advice and recommendation of these experienced adventurers. The great majority of those who conduct and contribute to the periodical productions of the metropolis, are Irishmen, who, for the most part belong to the Inns of Court, and duly perform the requisites of eating their way to the Bar. Indeed, when a young man has passed through Trinity College, and has to choose a profession, the law is almost the only one which his circumstances allow him to embrace. The facilities for going to the Bar are great, and the incidental expences comparatively slight; no collegiate regulations are to be complied with, nor are there any stated examinations which require the student to apply himself industriously to the learning of his profession ; on the contrary, men are frequently called to the Bar who have no knowledge even of the plainest rudiments of law, and who have scarcely read a hundred pages on any branch of the legal science. - Their only requisite perhaps is the flimsy faculty of speech-making. This fact accounts for the few men who distinguished themselves as Barristers, when compared with the number who are yearly admitted to the degree. I am far from being an advocate for any regulation of our Inns of Court which would go to multiply the difficulties in the career of a

young aspirant: I have lived long enough to value wealth and greatness only for what it *really* is; but it would certainly tend not a little to the respectability and learned character of the profession, if some course of examination were appointed previous to the admission of a man to the fellowship of barristers. This plan would thwart no one whose real intention was the practice of the Bar; on the contrary, it would compel the student to apply himself in his young days, and give him betimes a certain knowledge of his profession, and a relish for something more, which could not fail of being useful to him in after life, at the same time, that such a necessary attention to his books would very often save him from many of those vicious and dissipated habits which a youth, free from restraint, is too well calculated to produce.

Our legal forefathers felt the necessity of these examinations previous to the admission of barristers, for we find that of old, no student could be called to the Bar before he had undergone an examination as to his learning and abilities by the whole body of the Benchers of his Inn; and had also performed a variety of grand and pretty mootings. The two great periods of study, in ancient times, at the Inns of Court and Chancery were called "vacations;" one began on the first Monday after Lammas; and each lasted for three weeks and three days, during which time nothing was heard of but readings, mootings, boltings (arguing of cases) and other learned exercises. The attendance of students, however, at these exercises was entirely volun-

tary, and being carried on in the jargon called Law French, they gradually declined, and gave place to the comfortable practice (which is not likely soon to decline) of eating one's way to the Bar; so that at the present time, a student who has eaten a certain number of dinners in twelve terms, demands his call as a matter of course; the Benchers still retaining the power of refusing it, if the character of the applicant be open to objection. This power, however, in latter days, has seldom been exercised unjustly; the suspected person is always fairly heard, and has an appeal to the judges of the land from the decision of the Benchers.—Although upon principle any power of this kind is objectionable, as it gives men an opportunity of gratifying unworthy prejudices; yet, in the present case, when it is considered how great are the facilities of going to the Bar, and how necessary it is to preserve the profession against the introduction of dishonourable members, it would not be desirable to deprive the Benchers of their right of rejection.

As soon as M'Neil had settled himself in lodgings in Adam-street, Adelphi, he followed the established practice of his literary brethren, and entered himself on the books of Gray's Inn. Many men, as I have before hinted, take this step who never purpose going to the Bar; they say it gives them a respectable locality: it identifies them in some measure with a learned profession; and serves the double purpose of aiding them to pass as gentlemen, with the lovers of artificial distinction, and giving the appearance of application for the eyes of

the soberer few who look beyond the mere superficies of things, and calculate on what a man may be from the sterling powers and qualities of his youth. The latter class of society in the metropolis is indeed a small one: the great mass is principally composed of the *shadowy* and the *substantial*; the former placing all their affections upon the adventitious circumstances of life, and putting, in stronger language than that of words, to every candidate for their notice this awkward question:—"Who and what are you?" and the latter as provokingly confining their enquiry to "what are you worth?" Now unless the adventurer can skilfully evade, or satisfactorily answer these questions, he has little chance of making his way in either of the great divisions of the London world. The young Irish who make the law their nominal profession, are generally compelled to postpone their answer to the latter question, but they are not so reluctant to meet the former; in truth, the pride of ancestry is deeply felt amongst them, and they survey the roll of their pedigree with as much pleasure as a more pains-taking Englishman would survey the handsome rent roll bequeathed to him by his father, the *first* of his family. Even amongst the lower orders of the Irish, this regard for the honours of an ancient name is particularly striking. I have often seen it whimsically illustrated by persons filling the meanest stations in life; and by none more so than old Katty Mahony, my grandfather's cook for five-and-forty years in the county of Limerick. Kate hardly knew one letter of the alphabet from another; but her memory was strong,

the family chapter of descent had been carefully preserved by her kindred, and she had got it all in her head. Many a time have I listened to the old woman as she marshalled her ancestors, and recounted their honourable fetes, pausing as she came to one who stood out from the rest, and ennobled the name of Mahony : with her, there was no greater degradation in the world than not being able to show that one's family settled in Ireland many a year before the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell ; from this old dame, I caught all the taste I have for heraldry ; and she it was who first told me of the deeds (some of which might as well have been forgotten) of my own forefathers ; she always did more for the family of Mahony, than for that of her " master's son " till at length I began to doubt the authenticity of her records, and to examine the matter for myself. However, Kate was substantially right ; her ancestors grew better the farther they went back, and mine on the other hand dwindled away in the distance, and the chain was broken in 1654.

This attention to ancestry is strikingly neglected in England, even amongst very respectable families ; you enquire in vain of ninety-nine men out of a hundred for three or four branches of their genealogical tree ; many of them can trace no further back than their great grandfathers, and to speak the truth are quite indifferent about the matter. In large mercantile places, where the casualties of commerce are continually raising individuals from comparative indigence to wealth, there will always be a large class who have no motive for

looking backwards beyond the day of their own good fortune. I once knew a very worthy man, who had read much and thought a great deal more; and who was moreover of an ancient and honourable family; yet so little did he care about his ancestors, that when I spoke to him on the subject, he could only reckon up his forefathers for about a century past; and this seemed to me the more remarkable, as in the parish church near his residence, and to which he regularly repaired on the Sabbath day, there were numerous monuments and tablets, the inscriptions on which with a little help, enabled me to make out a pedigree of several hundred years' duration; the doing which I believe, gave me much greater pleasure than my friend experienced at finding he was of so old and honourable a stock; indeed, the only reward I received for my trouble was to hear him rejoice that there was a growing disrespect amongst us for mere *names* and *honours*, and to anticipate that the great efforts making to moralize and instruct the age, would lead to the breaking down of artificial notions of dignity, and procure the recognition of virtue and talent as the highest titles. Such must be the effect in a striking degree of the advance of knowledge; and it is a curious and profitable thing to look into our own history, and see how gradually the blind reverence for names has given way before the light of education. It was only so far back as Henry the First, (as Camden tells us) that "it seemed a disgrace for a Gentleman to have but one single name, as the meaner sort and bastards had. For the daughter and heire of

Fitz-Hamon, a great Lord (as Robert of Glocester in the Library of the industrious Antiquary Maister Iohn Stowe writeth,) when King Henry the First would have married her to his base sonne Robert, she first refusing answered—

It were to me a great shame,
To haue a Lord withouten his twa name ;

whereupon the King his Father, gave him the name of Fitz-Roy, who after was Earle of Glocester, and the onely worthy of his age in England."

The next thing M'Neil had to do was to obtain some literary employment; and accordingly several of his friends (and I was amongst them) sat in judgment upon his qualifications; to us were submitted a number of his productions in prose and verse; and it was left for our penetration to point out the most desirable course for the young man to follow. There were five of us on whom this task was imposed, and we found it no easy matter to arrive at a decision. Each had his favourite walk, into which he was desirous Bob should step forthwith; and we met four or five times without determining the point. At length, it was agreed that it would be desirable for our protégé to try any thing and every thing; and we therefore reduced the difficulty to the question as to what he should take first. Previous to our arriving at this good understanding, it deserves to be noticed that each of us took into consideration a specimen of Bob's talent, and formally reported thereon at a full meeting of the council at

Dennis Sullivan's chambers in the Middle Temple. The productions were thus allotted : to—

1. Alexander M'Cartney—a sketch entitled “The Irish Man of the World.”

2. John O' Keene—an unfinished tragedy, that had not been christened.

3. James Fitzwalter—a light essay on “Poverty ;” being an attempt to prove (in the words of the motto) that every thing is—

“Not bad *simpliciter*, nor good,
But merely as 'tis understood.—

It follows we can ne'er be sure,
Whether we pain or not endure,
And just so far are sore and grieved
As by the fancy is *believed*.”

4. Dennis Sullivan—A political paper “on the advantages of recognizing the Independence of South America.”

5. Myself—“Stanzas to my Mistress ;” with this somewhat mystical motto :

“Al molino, ed alla sposa,
Sempre manca qualche cosa.”

Italian Proverb.

On the appointed evening, the examiners delivered their opinions on the papers submitted to them, *seriatim*, M'Neil himself sitting as chairman of the meeting.

M'Cartney began, and, according to my notes, gave judgment somewhat to the following effect : “Gentlemen, it has fallen to my lot to open the business for

which we are now assembled ; this I cannot but regret as I see friends around me who are so much more capable than myself of giving sage advice to our young friend, and of rightly directing his energies. I may be permitted, however, to make a few introductory observations, before I report to the meeting my opinion of the production which has been laid before me ; these observations, Gentlemen, are suggested by the subject that our young friend has taken for the very able essay, which I now hold in my hand ; indeed, its very title is a sufficient text for my present purpose—‘ The Irish Man of the World ! ’ Gentlemen, I am sure we are all ready to confess that our fine but unfortunate country produces more ‘ men of the world ’ than all the other parts of the empire put together ; nor is this fact a matter of disgrace to us. Oppressed as we are at home—prevented by the numberless impediments which rise up against us, from pursuing a hopeful career on our own green isle ; and blessed or cursed as it may happen to be, with that spirit of enterprise which generally accompanies the consciousness of oppression—is it to be wondered at, that we seek other shores, where our energies will not be thwarted ; or where, at least, if we do not meet a friendly greeting, we shall be spared one pain—that, Gentlemen, of beholding a warm and generous people (and those people our countrymen) broken in their spirit, and blighted in their hopes by the withering hand of power ? (Hear, hear.) But it is frequently said against us, that we are designing adventurers, and heartless fortune-hunters, without moral restraint or do-

mestic virtues ;—that indeed, we are men of pleasure, and therefore men of vicious habits. I am aware, (too well aware for my own peace) how short a step it is from the path of pleasure to that of guilt ; but I know likewise that the errors of my countrymen are generally those which result from a sanguine temperament and a warm imagination. I don't know how it happens, my friends, that the men of our island, so near as it is to this country and Scotland, should be so widely distinguished in their feelings and habits from their brethren across the Irish Channel. Take a Scotchman and put him on his journey, ' frae the North,' you see him move along in a calm calculating mood, practising at every step that sober self-denial which lays the foundation of his success in after-life. He appears unmoved by passion, undisturbed by circumstances ; and true it is, that his life affords an example of patient perseverance and progressive well-doing. But, perhaps, when contemplating the moral and intellectual energies of Scotchmen, some consideration must be given to the domestic situation of their country.—Gentlemen, we are in a great degree influenced in character by the institutions around us. In Scotland, those institutions are congenial to the great majority of the people, whose feelings therefore are not roused into hostility at every step, by the gnawing reflection that their holiest opinions are proscribed, and their most sacred convictions only made the excuse for new oppressions. I am sure you will agree with me, my friends, that our career in life mainly depends upon the impressions we receive in

our young days : in Scotland, Gentlemen, the people and their institutions being in unison, no heart-burnings are engendered with the first exercise of reason, and the mind is consequently left free to pursue its peaceful and philosophic course, and to acquire a moral tone and consistency which it would never gain in the midst of untoward and inflaming associations. Now look at our own island, with its institutions and people continually at war ; to speak generally, the first truth that strikes upon a young Irishman is, that he has the mark of proscription upon him, that the intolerant *few* have subjected the *many* to their sway, and that learning, virtue, genius, are qualities that pass unrewarded, and only enable their possessor to feel how sad a thing it is to be a slave at home, an alien in one's own land. (Hear, hear, hear.) But, Gentlemen, I am wandering too far ; since the only intent of my observations is to shew how much the character of a people is exalted by the mild and equitable nature of their government. I come, then, to the point upon which I have more immediately to address you—the production of our friend ; and it gives me great pleasure to bear my humble testimony to the talent which he has displayed. The only objection I can find to the paper is its ‘ truth ;’ for I cannot but feel that pictures like the one before me, are not at all calculated to benefit us as a body. My friend has taken a young Irishman from Trinity College, and launched him upon the world, without fortune of course ; and indeed, with little else save his learning and his brogue. The adventurer is then made to pass

through scenes of a very objectionable nature—to figure as a spendthrift, gambler, debauchee—and at last by the dint of impudence, (which has the fashionable name of ‘address,’) to light upon a young lady with a good fortune, by which he makes his own. Gentlemen; Irishmen are already shunned quite enough in society, without the fears of prudent English mothers being worked upon by any overdone pieces of description. It is notorious that we can scarcely get into a good family without exciting suspicion. Is there a daughter? she is carefully kept out of the way. And in truth, the only fashionable use which is made of us, consists in our being invited to make a hand at whist when other friends are doubtful, or to attend some dowager to Kensington Gardens on an idle morning in the season. I know, my friends, that Irish skill and address will surmount all obstacles; but I put it to you as fellow sufferers, whether we ought to multiply the difficulties in our own career. One word, then, to our friend, (whose presence amongst us I again must hail) and I have done; that word is of advice; and however inconsistently it may be in me to give it, whose life has surely not been ‘the moral of his song,’ it will be found no less worthy of attention. You are young, and yet unpractised in the world, with your fortune to make in the midst of many competitors. Take care then betimes that you avoid pleasure and apply yourself industriously to your profession. In this country, talents such as you possess, joined to persevering industry, never pass unrewarded; and if you would have an example of the folly of the

other course, look at me ! It is now too late in the day for me to retrace my steps ; would to God that it were not so. I have run the round of pleasure till my head has grown giddy : and I have reaped my reward, in the blight of all my youthful hopes. But let me yet have one comfort, that of seeing others avoid the like follies ; and of being enabled (though I cannot rise myself) to rejoice in the success of my friends." (Hear, hear.)

This speech of M^cCartney's we all loudly cheered ; not so much for what he said, as the manner in which he spoke it : there is a warmth and earnestness in his mode of address, and a graceful elegance of delivery, that gives even to his most unpretending speeches a force and interest far above their intrinsic merits. He is indeed one of those orators who should be listened to, but not read ; for as he seldom thinks deeply himself, or takes the trouble of reasoning correctly, it is not to be expected that he should give us any thing for the mind to feed on ; and yet, by chance, I have heard him strike out a very good argument, and manage it with great skill. But by far his highest merit lies in throwing together "after-dinner" speeches : this is a peculiar talent, and however humble it may seem when rightly considered, yet it is most true that some of the best orators have been lamentably deficient in it ; for example, I have a friend, an ornament to the Bar and the Senate, who cannot return thanks in a respectable manner for his health being drunk—he always complains that he has nothing to talk about—no subject ;

now M'Cartney never speaks so well, as when he is not tied down to a point, but is left a perfect liberty to take as wide a range as his fancy may suggest.

O'Keene rose next, and observed "that he had only a very few observations to make on the unfinished tragedy; and to be candid, Gentlemen, (said he) I don't think I can safely recommend my friend to apply himself to the stage. There are many reasons against the dramatic pursuit, even assuming that a man has all the essential qualities of a play writer: the mortifications, for example, which a man of genius is liable to receive from the prejudice, ignorance, and avarice of managers,* as well as from the capricious judgment of an ill-assorted audience, are quite enough to deter any considerate man from the pursuit of dramatic literature; and then, even to be a successful author, and to gain an uncertain income by such an employment, is far from being so respectable as the industrious practice of a profession will make us. I, therefore, recommend to my young friend to give up all thoughts of the stage, and only apply himself to literature till such times as he can do without it. His poetry certainly does him much credit; some of his descriptions are pleasing and even elegant; but the piece is altogether deficient in action, and wholly unfit for representation."

Bob looked somewhat grave at this judgment against him, as he placed his greatest reliance on the unfinished

* I should, perhaps, remark here that the speaker had not long before felt the disappointment to which a rejected tragedy gives birth.

tragedy ; but Fitzwalter, with the " Essay on Poverty" in his hand, got up and cheered him a little. " Faith, (observed Fitz) this is a whimsical paper, and amusing enough, I'll swear, for '*The New Monthly*' or '*The London*.' I'll just recommend you, my lad, to stick to this line of writing—'tis all the rage just now—and a very convenient fashion it is ; you're not bothered with facts, dates, or arguments ; and talk of premises, why only just make what you choose, and draw any conclusions, the farther they are from the right ones the better. The paper I hold in my hand, Gentlemen, half deceived me last night into the snuggest belief on this side the water ; for reading it quietly over to myself, I felt for an hour I was quite rich enough, in all conscience. But in walked old Katty—' An' you please, Sir, (said she) there's a gentleman waiting below.' ' Show him up, (said I) ask him his name.' ' Oh, Mr. Stitchly, now this is a very kind call of yours—won't you be seated?' and he made a low bow, and pulled out of his pocket a small slip of paper—' I hope you'll excuse me for being so bold, Sir ; but I've a very large sum to make up by the first of next month, and I trust you'll oblige me with your small account—I would not have pressed you so soon, but you know, Sir, the thing has been standing for more than a twelvemonth last Christmas.' ' Why that's very true,' said I, looking quite fierce at the tailor ; ' but your money's quite safe, you know—are you afraid o' me?' ' Oh! not at all,' said he. ' Well, my good fellow, just leave your small bit of account, and I'll call

at your shop in a day or two.' This tailor, you see, Gentlemen, destroyed all the truth of Bob's essay, but that's no fault of his, and sure enough 'poverty's' only a matter of fancy to those who have money sufficient to make it so."

Dennis Sullivan prided himself upon his political talents; he had written articles for a newspaper ever since his arrival in the metropolis, some ten or twelve years ago, and therefore he was a kind of Mentor in these matters. "I have carefully read (said he, in a solemn and dogmatical tone) the paper on South America, and from the long experience which I have had in the world of politics, I may be allowed to speak on such subjects with somewhat of authority. Gentlemen, to constitute a good political writer, many things are required: it is necessary that he should have a natural taste for the subject, be well read in general history, and fully acquainted with the laws of his country. I am aware that these requisites are not possessed by many of those who write for the leading journals of the day, and that the Metropolitan Press, taken generally, is distinguished for any thing but talent. Many of the provincial journals, particularly some in the North of England, are very superior in their management to those of the metropolis: the original articles in the latter are frequently vapid and verbose; the object of the writer continually displaying itself in the desire to eke out so many words to fill a certain space. Whilst I have had the opportunity, however, of directing a portion of the press, I may safely say, without subjecting my-

self to the charge of vanity, that I have constantly endeavoured to avoid these faults, and have not been altogether unsuccessful. But as to my friend in the chair, I cannot, to speak in the language of candour, recommend him to pursue the course of politics; not that his essay wants talent or information, quite the contrary; still in the present day there is no demand for such writing, and a man would waste his energies for little profit. Gentlemen, I am sorry to say, that the public have quite lost their relish for political enquiries, and that the love of liberty seems to have given way to the love of literature and science; I must not be considered as undervaluing the latter acquirements, but I am confident, Gentlemen, you will agree with me that they are not half so estimable as a high relish for political liberty. (Fitzwalter and myself shook our heads.) But there is another consideration that operates powerfully with me, whilst advising my young friend: he purposes attaching himself to the legal profession, and therefore it would be highly desirable that he should abstain as much as possible from the expression of his political sentiments, or identifying himself with a particular party. He is not rich or independent of the world, and should carefully abstain from such a declaration of his opinions as may hereafter make against his interest. As a friend, I give him this advice, and warn him of the profitless danger of writing politics."

Bob's stanzas to his mistress gave me the opportunity of throwing in my little drawback; in the usual way; "The lines are good enough," said I, "but sentimental poetry fetches nothing in the market; even the minor

Dennis Sullivan's chambers in the Middle Temple. The productions were thus allotted : to—

1. Alexander M'Cartney—a sketch entitled “ The Irish Man of the World.”

2. John O' Keene—an unfinished tragedy, that had not been christened.

3. James Fitzwalter—a light essay on “ Poverty ;” being an attempt to prove (in the words of the motto) that every thing is—

“ Not bad *simpliciter*, nor good,
But merely as 'tis understood.—

It follows we can ne'er be sure,
Whether we pain or not endure,
And just so far are sore and grieved
As by the fancy is *believed*.”

4. Dennis Sullivan—A political paper “ on the advantages of recognizing the Independence of South America.”

5. Myself—“ Stanzas to my Mistress ;” with this somewhat mystical motto :

“ Al molino, ed alla sposa,
Sempre manca qualche cosa.”

Italian Proverb.

On the appointed evening, the examiners delivered their opinions on the papers submitted to them, *seriatim*, M'Neil himself sitting as chairman of the meeting.

M'Cartney began, and, according to my notes, gave judgment somewhat to the following effect : “ Gentle-
men, it has fallen to my lot to open the business for

which we are now assembled ; this I cannot but regret as I see friends around me who are so much more capable than myself of giving sage advice to our young friend, and of rightly directing his energies. I may be permitted, however, to make a few introductory observations, before I report to the meeting my opinion of the production which has been laid before me ; these observations, Gentlemen, are suggested by the subject that our young friend has taken for the very able essay, which I now hold in my hand ; indeed, its very title is a sufficient text for my present purpose—‘ The Irish Man of the World ! ’ Gentlemen, I am sure we are all ready to confess that our fine but unfortunate country produces more ‘ men of the world ’ than all the other parts of the empire put together ; nor is this fact a matter of disgrace to us. Oppressed as we are at home—prevented by the numberless impediments which rise up against us, from pursuing a hopeful career on our own green isle ; and blessed or cursed as it may happen to be, with that spirit of enterprise which generally accompanies the consciousness of oppression—is it to be wondered at, that we seek other shores, where our energies will not be thwarted ; or where, at least, if we do not meet a friendly greeting, we shall be spared one pain—that, Gentlemen, of beholding a warm and generous people (and those people our countrymen) broken in their spirit, and blighted in their hopes by the withering hand of power ? (Hear, hear.) But it is frequently said against us, that we are designing adventurers, and heartless fortune-hunters, without moral restraint or do-

mestic virtues ;—that indeed, we are men of pleasure, and therefore men of vicious habits. I am aware, (too well aware for my own peace) how short a step it is from the path of pleasure to that of guilt ; but I know likewise that the errors of my countrymen are generally those which result from a sanguine temperament and a warm imagination. I don't know how it happens, my friends, that the men of our island, so near as it is to this country and Scotland, should be so widely distinguished in their feelings and habits from their brethren across the Irish Channel. Take a Scotchman and put him on his journey, ' frae the North,' you see him move along in a calm calculating mood, practising at every step that sober self-denial which lays the foundation of his success in after-life. He appears unmoved by passion, undisturbed by circumstances ; and true it is, that his life affords an example of patient perseverance and progressive well-doing. But, perhaps, when contemplating the moral and intellectual energies of Scotchmen, some consideration must be given to the domestic situation of their country.—Gentlemen, we are in a great degree influenced in character by the institutions around us. In Scotland, those institutions are congenial to the great majority of the people, whose feelings therefore are not roused into hostility at every step, by the gnawing reflection that their holiest opinions are proscribed, and their most sacred convictions only made the excuse for new oppressions. I am sure you will agree with me, my friends, that our career in life mainly depends upon the impressions we receive in

our young days : in Scotland, Gentlemen, the people and their institutions being in unison, no heart-burnings are engendered with the first exercise of reason, and the mind is consequently left free to pursue its peaceful and philosophic course, and to acquire a moral tone and consistency which it would never gain in the midst of untoward and inflaming associations. Now look at our own island, with its institutions and people continually at war ; to speak generally, the first truth that strikes upon a young Irishman is, that he has the mark of proscription upon him, that the intolerant *few* have subjected the *many* to their sway, and that learning, virtue, genius, are qualities that pass unrewarded, and only enable their possessor to feel how sad a thing it is to be a slave at home, an alien in one's own land. (Hear, hear, hear.) But, Gentlemen, I am wandering too far ; since the only intent of my observations is to shew how much the character of a people is exalted by the mild and equitable nature of their government. I come, then, to the point upon which I have more immediately to address you—the production of our friend ; and it gives me great pleasure to bear my humble testimony to the talent which he has displayed. The only objection I can find to the paper is its ‘ truth ;’ for I cannot but feel that pictures like the one before me, are not at all calculated to benefit us as a body. My friend has taken a young Irishman from Trinity College, and launched him upon the world, without fortune of course ; and indeed, with little else save his learning and his brogue. The adventurer is then made to pass

reported in the gallery of that House, of which he is now one of the most distinguished ornaments.

Amongst the letters of introduction which M'Neil brought with him from Ireland, was one to Mrs. Firman, a widow lady who resided in Harley-street. This gentlewoman was about forty; she had been left by her husband with the care of four daughters and a son, for whose establishment in life her means were somewhat inadequate. But she was a woman of fashion as far as her circumstances would admit; and her great ambition was to see her children respectably settled in the world. With her, gentility was every thing; and I believe she would have sacrificed half the real comforts of life for the sake of an appearance. Her daughters were now growing into womanhood; the eldest being twenty and the youngest nearly sixteen. They were elegant girls, well educated and clever, particularly the first, who united great strength of mind to a fine person and a delicate taste for the most pleasing accomplishments of woman. Mrs. Firman received M'Neil with great cordiality, approaching to something like friendship,—the fact was, he had come recommended to her by an old Irish relative for whom she had much regard, and whose substantial kindness to her family was not soon to be forgotten.

As a woman of the world, however, she saw some danger in introducing the young man to a close intimacy with her daughters—they were poor, and he was so likewise, at the same time that his manners and accomplishments gave him an evident advantage in society. Mrs.

Firman, therefore, contented herself with being kind to M'Neil when she saw him, taking care to be "not at home," as often as it suited her convenience. She did not give him frequent invitations to her parties; and when she did invite him, it was only to meet her second-rate company, to whom, in reply to "What is he?" it was sufficient to say "A gentleman going to the Bar." And besides, Bob was indebted for many of his invitations from Mrs. Firman, to the fact of her being a widow, and to the awkward situation in which such ladies are placed for the want of a beau: in London it is quite impossible that they can attend certain places without the arm of a gentleman; an Exhibition, a walk in Kensington Gardens, the Theatre, the Church, &c., all require the presence of a gallant, and Captain Cameron and Mr. Dibble the banker's son are occasionally out of town, or otherwise engaged; so that it is particularly convenient to have a less important personage at command, who when better company cannot be obtained, will feel honoured by attending on a fashionable widow and her young daughters; these latter gentlemen, too, are generally to be summoned from the Temple at the shortest notice; and if at the eleventh hour, a beau should be required, he can readily be obtained by a note something like that, of which the following is a copy:—

"Mrs. Firman presents her respects to Mr. M'Neil, and will feel honoured by his company this evening—a small party. Mrs. F. hopes Mr. M'Neil will excuse this very short notice.

"*Harley-street, May 10, 1800.*"

Bob saw clearly enough the game that was played with him, he felt that the lady used him as a matter of convenience only: but it was not for him to notice or take umbrage at these things: he came into society as an adventurer, whose interest it was to take advantage of every circumstance that occurred, without reference to the feelings that give rise to it. He, therefore, never inquired whether he was invited to take a seat, or merely to fill up a vacancy, it was quite enough that he was invited, and that an opportunity was thus afforded him of turning matters to good account; with this feeling he read such notes as the one before mentioned with great seriousness—said to himself “a mere humbug this!”—and dressed accordingly. He consoled himself that he should, ere long, have made sufficient progress in society to justify his throwing up the invitations of Mrs. Firman; but just at present, when she was almost the only fashionable friend to whose parties he could gain admission, it would be an act of great imprudence to forego such advantages merely on the score of feeling, a thing which in the polite world generally gives way to convenience; and thus it is, that persons who would gladly be a hundred miles apart, are constantly brought into contact, and perform to each other all the courteous civilities of life. And it was quite pardonable in M’Neil thus to act in opposition to his feelings, and occasionally even to bear the mortification of a tacit insult, when it is considered how many impediments exist against the entrance of a young man into the “good society” of London. But

Once set him afloat, and let him have an opportunity of recommending himself, by a thousand little attentions, and the way is surprisingly smooth and even.

Bob, to do him justice, made the most of opportunity ; and after a short time, stood tolerably well for a poor gentleman in the opinion of several elderly ladies with whom he played a sober game at whist, of several younger ones with whom he quadrilled, and of a few calculating fathers whose fancies he humoured, and whose prejudices he respected.

Very soon after their acquaintance, M'Neil accidentally discovered Mrs. Firman's real sentiments towards him. At one of the lady's crowded routs he entered into conversation with the Hon. Mr. Northley, the young son of a Scotch Baron : this gentleman arrived at the party somewhat late, and it was quite apparent that he had lingered a little too long over his bottle : he was therefore more than usually communicative, and learning, in the course of chat, that Bob's domicile was in the Temple, he proposed that they should walk home together, their destination being the same. "I shall be most happy," said M'Neil : and they took their departure immediately.

"Fine girls, the Miss Firmans ;" observed Northley, in order to begin a conversation.

"Rather so, I think," replied Bob, "particularly the eldest."

"You are right, she is so ; but too high, and a blue—a great objection that."

"You don't think it a recommendation, then?"

"Not at all, quite the contrary—and they are very poor—no fortune whatever, I believe. Won't do, you know, for young lawyers in these briefless days."

"Why, truly, the young members of the profession are not generally too rich."

"Too rich, Sir; not one in ten has a couple of hundred clear of his profession, and that clears him nothing."

"So, you are an advocate for a rich wife?"

"Why, to be sure I am—pray how is the younger son of a poor Scotch Peer to live if he doesn't get hold of a rich man's daughter; I made an attack the other day on the only child of Sir William Wilton: a fine clever girl, Sir, and a good estate."

"And I hope you succeeded."

"Not at all—I pressed my suit hard, but it wouldn't do; I believe she's engaged: her mother said something about an affection for a young Irishman whom she met at some watering place last summer. No reflection upon your countrymen, my good Sir, but they are desperately bold clever fortune-hunters."

"Why, Mr. Northley, we certainly have the credit of being able in that way. But the Scotch—"

"Oh! nothing like you, Sir—we are too prudent, too cautious by half—you take the thing by storm, whilst we are calculating about it. But Mrs. Firman, we were speaking of her daughters. By the way, the old lady—"

"Old lady, Sir, she wouldn't be well pleased to hear you give her that title—she's only forty." §

"Well, that's true enough, I believe; but then it

makes a woman look on the wrong side of life when she is surrounded by three or four handsome daughters. I was about to say, Mrs. Firman seems very anxious to get her daughters well married."

"She does so: but that's natural enough: and I wish they may go off well."

"And so do I, upon my soul; and if the eldest had but a good fortune, I think I should be in love with her myself. By the bye, though, she's an artful girl, up to all the tricks of fashion, Sir—only step to my chambers with me, and I'll shew you a rare specimen of her dissimulation."

The two gentlemen had by this time reached the Temple, and Mr. Northley's chambers being on the first floor, M'Neil accompanied him thither.

"Now, my good Sir," said Northley, "you'll take a chair near the fire, and my servant Tom shall bring us a cool bottle of claret; my head is literally giddy with the jumping about at Mrs. Firman's rout. Tom, has any thing been brought for me?"

"This slip of paper, Sir," replied the lad, and laid it before the young barrister.

"Why, what have we here? As I live, a fee marked upon it!"

WIGGINS ats. SMITH and another.

MR. NORTHLEY

To move that the defendant in this cause may be discharged out of custody on filing common bail.

1. GUA.

M

Well, this is a piece of professional good luck, it cannot be said I do no business."

"And permit me to drink to your future success, Mr. Northley," exclaimed Bob, as he paid his respects to the claret.

"Thank you, thank you! But now I'll shew you Miss Firman's letter. It seems that Lady Northley and one of my sisters a short time ago met some company at Mrs. Firman's which they had some slight objection to—and the other day another invitation coming to them, my sister addressed her friend, Mary Ann Firman, setting forth the old lady's scruples: this epistle produced the following (which I found in my sister's writing-desk yesterday) from Miss Firman. I'll read it, Sir, and you'll see what a fine piece of convenience they make of the poor devil of a gentleman:—

"Harley-street, May 12, 1800.

"MY DEAR MISS NORTHLEY,

"I thank you for your kind note, and hasten to answer the most material part of it. You tell me that your good Mamma objects to your attending parties to which poor Irish gentlemen are invited, and you allude to the presence of Mr. M'Neil at our last rout. My dear friend, I assure you it was a mere accident that brought him amongst us on the occasion to which you allude, and we all felt much regret at the circumstance. You know very well that such gentlemen are rather convenient sometimes—to walk with us

in the morning, and say pleasant things to us: indeed, we could hardly live without them, because we feel they are so much our humble servants, and always at command. Mamma agrees with Lady N. that they ought not to be invited too often, and never to meet our *best* friends; but I'll tell you how Mr. M'N. came to be present at our last party. He was walking with us one morning in the park, when Kate (who is always so very heedless) said to him in Mamma's hearing—'We shall see you at our Wednesday's party, Mr. M'Neil?' He did not reply to my sister, but you see, my dear, we could not avoid giving him an invitation. This Mamma did very distant and formal: but it was so provoking that he came, when nobody expected him; and then he made himself so very agreeable to the Miss T.'s, and he quadrilles so well that it was quite unpleasant; for several of our friends asked who he was: and, don't be angry, my dear Miss Northley, but I think you were very much pleased with his attentions, and he said the next day that you were one of the most elegant ladies in the room. But pray let us see you on Monday, and be assured that he will not be invited; for Mamma would rather offend him than run the risk of his plaguing us again as he did at our last party; but I should be sorry to do that, as really he is a very graceful young man, and if he had but a good fortune,—and they say he'll be certain of success in his profession, but it will be so long first. It was very presuming in him to leave his card in Berkeley-square. Pray assure

good Lady N. that he will not be invited. I have a thousand things to say to you, Capt. C. walked with us yesterday, and was so entertaining,

“ My dear friend,

“ Yours, very affectionately,

“ MARY ANN FIRMAN.”

“ There, Sir,” observed the young barrister, “ that’s how they use Mr. M’Neil: it would be a good joke to let him know who his friends are, and how convenient he is sometimes.”

“ A very good joke, indeed, Sir,” replied Bob, “ I dare say he’d be highly amused at it.”

“ No, no, that’s rather too much. Highly amused! You’ll take some more wine?”

“ I thank you, Mr. Northley, but really, I have had quite enough for one sitting; and I must wish you good morning.”

“ Well, my good Sir, you’ll let me see you again. I shall be very happy to become better acquainted. You know the way to my chambers, and I’ll find my way to your’s. But, by the bye, I’ve not the pleasure of knowing your name.”

“ M’Neil, Sir, permit me to hand you my card.”

“ M’Neil, eh! why, surely—upon my soul, Sir, I beg ten thousand pardons for reading that letter, but you are not the same gentleman?”

“ The very same, who is now and then so great a convenience. But we’ll talk of this matter another day, Mr. Northley, and I feel truly obliged for the

knowledge you've given me of my friends. Good night, or rather, good morning."

But Mrs. Firman had no reason to fear any designs of M'Neil upon her daughter's heart. He respected the young lady, as most gentlemen in their gallant days do respect young ladies; nay, although he never dreamed of marrying her himself, yet he would have felt somewhat disturbed at the thought of any one else doing so. This was a strange and rather inconsistent feeling: but it is, I believe, entertained by most of us in our youthful days towards more than one fair lady; and the sex have, indeed, the best reason in the world for complaining of the inexplicable conduct which gentlemen pursue towards them. Kind, gallant, and attentive, they too frequently induce their female companions to believe that something more is meant than common courtesy, whilst at the same time they are only administering to their own vanity at the expence of others peace of mind. M'Neil was not altogether free from this offence: his attentions to Mary Ann Firman were too marked and particular to escape observation; and the young lady's mother soon found it necessary to counsel her on the great necessity of preserving only a friendly feeling towards the young man. Mary Ann listened to her prudent mother's advice with the utmost seriousness, and assented to the reasonableness and force of her remarks; but when Mrs. Firman went further and urged her daughter to accept the hand of a rich suitor who had recently declared himself, the young lady forgot her disguise,

and warmly declared that although she did not believe M'Neil entertained a stronger feeling for her than that of respect, yet her heart had been given to him, and she was resolved never to marry another. This sudden declaration at first somewhat disturbed Mrs. Firman; but she soon consoled herself with the reflection that by declining to invite the young man to her house, and taking every prudent opportunity of promoting the addresses of Mr. Dibble, she should at length succeed in making a good match for her daughter. The last named gentleman was the son of a city banker, and was now about thirty-five, a very proper age (Mrs. Firman considered) for marrying, when men are presumed to have sown all their wild oats, and are contented to sit down quietly with a wife about a dozen years younger than themselves. Mr. Dibble, however, had not been remarkable for the wandering career of his youth; indeed, he was of a sober temperament, to which he was mainly indebted for the comparative steadiness of his life. He had, likewise, at an early age, under the direction of his industrious father, acquired habits of business, the love of which rather increased as he approached the steady age of forty. Old Dibble was altogether a citizen, and hated the country west of Temple Bar. His rural seat was at Clapton, where he had a good plain house, and a famous cellar of old port; this was the banker's favourite wine, and he always contended that it was the only sort of foreign beverage which harmonized with roast beef, and suited the English

constitution. "There, (he would exclaim, holding up a bum per) there, gentlemen! in this we have something worth feeding upon, old, rough and fine, gentlemen." So much attached was the banker to his banking-house and Clapton, that nothing could induce him to give up the former wholly to his son, and let the latter; although these two things had been stoutly urged by Mrs. Dibble.

"What, (said the old man, after dinner one Sunday, at Clapton) would you have me give up business, the only comfort of my life, and die of very idleness!"

"The only comfort of your life, Mr. Dibble! Isn't it a shame that at your age you don't give up the bustle of business, and retire from the City to enjoy a few of the pleasures of the fashionable world?"

"The fashionable world, indeed! I hate the fashionable world; really, ever since you were presented at Court by Mrs. Gayling, the Lord Mayor's lady, you've thought of nothing else but parties and the west end of the town. But, say what you please, Mrs. Dibble, I never will consent to take a house in Portland-place, and make a fool of myself by giving large and costly routs to the *bon ton*, as you call it. Not I, indeed, the very thought of it disturbs me more than a fall of ten per cent. in the stocks."

"Surely, if you have no wish to please me, (rejoined the good lady) you ought to think of your children, and how necessary it is to introduce them into good society. I wish to see my daughter married into a noble family, and my son made a baronet."

" A baronet ! what's a title without money, or even with it. I'd much rather see Jack alderman of the ward, and Emily married to my old friend Dick Smith's son, who is a good steady young tradesman, and promises to follow in the steps of his respected father. Smith has worked hard in his time : I remember well we began life with a similar kind of fortune, but thanks to the respectability of trade, we can now buy nine-tenths of the men upon 'Change. It would be a happy day for me, Mrs. Dibble, if I could see the girl married to young Smith ; but you, madam, you are for ever encouraging her to hate trade and tradesmen ; but remember this, that if she marries that half-pay captain fellow, she has none of my money. No, no, I hav'n't made a fortune to suffer it to be thrown away at my time of life upon a graceless squandering blockhead, who has no brains or honour, and whose fortune consists in a red coat. Ah, Mrs. Dibble, I regret the day you went to Court ; before then you were a contented citizen's wife, and paid a proper respect to trade."

" I hate trade, Sir ; and if I live, Emily shall never marry young Smith."

" And whilst I live, madam, she shall never marry Captain Cameron. I'll make my will—I'll cut her off—a shilling, madam. You provoke me, Mrs. Dibble : but I'll be cool."

" Ah, you may be in a rage if you like it, but Emily shall not disgrace herself and my family by marrying a tradesman."

"Your family, madam; why when I married you, all your friends together couldn't buy a hundred in the threes—you hadn't a sixpence, and your father—

"He was a gentleman, as every body knows: and never had low ideas."

"Poor man! he was a sober kind of fellow, sure enough: but as to being a gentleman, my dear, we must all remember when he was one of the lord mayor's footmen. Not at all the worse for that, to be sure—but to hear his daughter talking thus, forgetting that not forty years ago she had only one single gown to her back, as true as my name's Dibble."

"'Tis false, you monster! I had plenty of clothes, and might have had many a better man than you."

"Well, now don't be in a rage, my dear wife; after living together so many years it is as well not to quarrel about trifles,—let us go on to the end of our journey quietly, for we can't hope to be here much longer. I am quite resolved not to get in a rage any more, but pray don't provoke me by your foolish schemes."

"Mr. Dibble, I've always been a good wife."

"You have, my dear."

"And therefore you ought to afford me some little gratification."

"And so I will, any thing you ask, provided it be in reason."

"Then what can be your objection to a house in Portland-place, when it would give us all so much

pleasure, and the situation is so healthy, you would find the benefit of it yourself."

"No benefit whatever, my dear wife. I hate the west end of the metropolis."

"Only think, that we have no place in town to give a party in."

"So much the better, it preserves me from a great annoyance, and our children form an additional source of temptation; and I am sorry to say, there's very little virtue or honour amongst the fashionables at the west end of the town. Jack at present is a steady man, and I should be grieved to see him ruined by bad company. I trust he'll bear in mind the lessons I have taught him, and follow the example of his father, whose credit is good in any part of Europe. That's the sort of honour I wish to see him preserve."

"But if he marries Miss Firman you must give him a house at the other end of the town. She is a woman of family, and can't live in the City."

"Don't tell me about family—has she any fortune? Not a shilling; and yet if the boy likes her, I hav'n't much objection to the match, for I think she's a sensible girl, and will soon give up the follies which her mother has taught her,—if they behave well and go on steadily, I'll give them fifty thousand to begin with. But Emily shall never marry that captain."

"I am sure he's a very gentlemanly man, and you would like him as well as I do if you knew him better."

"I'll never know him better; and I must beg that

he is not invited to my table, or I shall be compelled to insult him to his face."

"You could not behave so rudely as that surely, and Emily likes him extremely, and every body says he is a most handsome fascinating man, and so polite."

"A handsome man, indeed! a coarse jew-looking, whisker-lipped fellow, who is hunting about the town for a fortune. The scoundrel shall never see the colour of my money."

"I am really surprised, Mr. Dibble, at your language, you ought to know better than to use such coarse expressions towards a gentleman who visits us; he left his card here yesterday, and will dine with us next Sunday at my invitation."

"Then, madam, you will dine without me."

"That we can't do, I told him he would see you, and be quite at home with us."

"I will not see the scoundrel. I shall dine at Smith's; Emily will go with me: she'll not disobey her father, I'm quite certain of that. You will entertain the captain alone, Mrs. Dibble."

"Your treatment is not to be borne, Sir, thus to insult a man of fashion."

"D—n fashion, madam, he shall not dine at my table, and that's my last word on this subject; I will step to my friend Smith's till you have cooled yourself a little, Mrs. Dibble; oh! that I had ever suffered you to go to Court."

* * * *

This Captain Cameron was a gay, pleasant man,

whose attentions to the banker's daughter were not disliked by her; and the young lady's mother, by encouraging his suit, materially encreased his chances of ultimate success. Emily, however, was not firmly fixed in her choice: she was flattered by the attentions of a fashionable soldier; but she loved her father, and respected even his prejudices: it is more than probable, therefore, that but for the aid and kind offices of Mrs. Dibble, the captain would have besieged the young lady's heart in vain. As it was, she stoutly declared her resolution never to marry without the consent of her father; and the fortune-hunting soldier saw very plainly that his only hope was in being able to shake this awkward resolution, and induce the young lady to elope with him. He had spoken to Mrs. Dibble on this subject, who after a little hesitation agreed to the captain's plan, and promised to use every argument in its favour to her daughter. The soldier knew how much is done in matters of love by perseverance; that indeed, the ladies are proverbial for submitting at length to a patient and inflexible lover, who sets out upon his expedition resolved not to take "No" for an answer, or to suffer coolness, time, or rivals, to divert him from his steady purpose. And so well did the captain conduct his suit, that in progress of time the young lady displayed evident symptoms of a relenting disposition. At first she would not listen to the word "elopement;" and therefore she was safe: but now she consented to speculate on the error of disobedience, and to reason with her gallant admirer on the manifest

impropriety of a trip to Gretna. In matters of this kind, I believe, when ladies reason their safety is endangered—indeed, they seldom resort to arguments against a measure until they are half convinced that the measure itself is good.

Emily's resolution was fast giving way, when a circumstance occurred, which put quite a different feature on the business. One day M'Neil and his friend Northley were dining together at a comfortable second-rate hotel, when they enquired of the waiter if any new company had arrived. "Very little, indeed, Sir," replied Thomas, as he drew the cork of a second bottle—only a foreign lady, who can hardly make herself understood. We don't know what to do with her; she's a pretty French woman, but seems very sad, and wishes to ask us a great number of questions."

"Bring me a slip of paper," said M'Neil, "and we will soon know what the lady wants." He accordingly wrote in French that if the stranger wished to make any inquiries, a gentleman would be happy to answer them. Thomas shewed the slip of paper to the stranger, who read it with the greatest earnestness, and hastily wrote a request to have an interview with the gentleman. M'Neil received this summons with great pleasure, and as he proceeded to the apartment of the lady, observed, "A pretty French woman, Northley, I leave you to your wine." Bob was particularly interested with the appearance of the lady, who rose and approached towards him, as he entered the room. She

apologized for the liberty she had taken, and added that she was in a strange country, whither she had come, unknown to her friends, in the hope of finding her husband. The substance of her story was as follows—

About three years before, whilst living a retired life, with her father and sister, at Versailles, she became acquainted with an English Officer, who had obtained an introduction to her father's table. The soldier was young, handsome, and intelligent: it was not to be wondered at therefore, that he soon made an impression upon the susceptible heart of the French girl, whom, after a few months' intimacy, he married, according to the laws of her country. This union was strongly opposed by Monsieur Delvoix, who could not see his favourite daughter taken away from his home and protection without a father's pang; he felt, too, that in giving herself to a foreigner, she had only to rely upon his honour and the constancy of his affection. But it was in vain that he urged all these things, and wept in very bitterness of soul at the thought of what might happen to his dear Lisette. She loved her father tenderly; but another love had possessed her soul, and fixed her destiny. Besides, her lover had promised to make Versailles his home, and her own France, his country—and she was not practised in the ways of this world, and so her young heart believed him. For two years, her English husband contributed to her happiness, and she bore him two children, a boy and girl, whose infant innocence promised to increase the blessing of their home. Shortly

after the birth of their second child, the soldier received intelligence from England which compelled him to leave Versailles for a short period. He promised that his absence should be but for a little while, and that a month at farthest should restore him to the arms of his dear *Lisette*. She did not, could not doubt him; for to do so would have been to think what to her was impossible, that a father could desert his fond wife and her two little ones. And when at parting she hung upon his neck and wept, it was from the fulness of her heart, which had reposed its all of love and hope upon him, and could only say, "I shall count the hours till you come back again."

The long and anxious month, however, passed away; but the husband of *Lisette* did not return. Her father feared that his daughter was deserted, but she still believed that the morrow would restore her husband to her arms, and that nothing but very urgent circumstances, or some dreadful accident, could have detained him so long. After three months of agonizing suspense, *Lisette* left Versailles for England, resolved to trace out her husband, and learn his fate. Her departure was unknown to her friends, who had several times taken measures to prevent her leaving Versailles in consequence of her having wildly expressed an intention of doing so. She had not arrived in London more than a few hours when she had the good fortune to meet M'Neil.

Her narrative deeply interested him, and the simple and artless manner in which it was conveyed convinced

him that her story was true. When she spoke of her husband, although he had deserted her, it was in the most affectionate terms; and she frequently declared that some sad misfortune must have befallen him, or he would have returned long ago to his home at Versailles, where, she added, every one loved him, but none so fondly as his wretched Lisette. Bob reflected for some moments on the poor lady's tale; indeed his feelings were too much engaged, to suffer him to calculate on the best means of serving her. But recollecting himself, he inquired the name of her husband, and the regiment to which he belonged, thinking it probable that by learning these particulars, he might be enabled to ascertain his fate. Lisette immediately gave M'Neil a card, on which was written "Captain Cameron;" and added that he was a cavalry officer; but of what regiment she was totally unacquainted. On reading the card, it instantly occurred to him that he had met a Captain Cameron at Mrs. Firman's, and that probably the latter officer could help him in his search. Bob knew that the last named Captain was laying stout siege to the heart of Emily Dibble, and he also was slightly acquainted with the Banker's family at Clapton, having more than once partaken of the old gentleman's favourite port. He therefore resolved, with the slight information he had been enabled to obtain, instantly to set about a strict inquiry after all the Camerons in the army, and to ascertain if possible the movements of each of them for the last ten years; thus (thought he) I shall find the Captain who

settled at Versailles. Full of this resolve, he took his leave of the sorrowful Lisette, and rejoined his friend Northley.

"Well, Bob," exclaimed the latter, as his companion re-entered the room, "a pretty French girl indeed! or you would not have been detained so long,—It was hardly the thing to leave me here for nearly two hours, whilst you were indulging in amorous dalliance with this fair fugitive!"

"Why truly, my friend, I have been deeply interested with the converse of the poor wanderer; but I assure you my only motive in staying so long was, that I might find the means of serving one who has been basely betrayed."

"The old story, Bob! betrayed and seduced; and you believe it all, eh? I thought you knew more of the world than to be gulled by tales of this description. An innocent, virtuous French lady, I dare say, who travelled to this country alone—vastly prudent, upon my soul."

"Well, Northley, whatever indiscretion there might have been in this last step, I am quite convinced, from all that I have seen and heard, that the stranger has not deceived me; and if you will permit me, I'll make you acquainted, as we walk to the Temple, with the particulars of my interview."

"I can have no objection, certainly, to hear the story, and I dare say she dressed it up well. Really, my good fellow, you are green in the world yet."

Bob related the adventure to his friend, who, however, was nothing moved by the pathetic mode in which

it was communicated to him. He still insisted that it was a mere trick, and could not be prevailed on to assist his friend in his search.

In the morning M'Neil made a call at Mrs. Firman's. He had, in pursuance of the prudent resolution of that lady, become quite a stranger to the family; neither would he have called now, but from his anxiety to pursue the adventure. Mrs. Firman was "not at home," as usual, but Bob on this occasion did not content himself with leaving his card; he inquired for Miss Firman, and before the footman could repeat the useful and convenient "not at home," the young lady herself crossed the hall; so that a recognition was unavoidable, and certainly not undesired on either side. After a few customary gratulations had passed between them, M'Neil inquired for the Captain Cameron, whom he had met several times in Harley-street, and briefly stated his reasons for doing so.

"Oh!" replied the young lady. "I suppose the Captain is married by this time. We were told in confidence last night that he would elope with Emily Dibble in a day or two; and I dare say he has gone off this morning."

"I hope not, for I am desirous of asking him a few questions, and, by the by, I think it would be a most imprudent step on both sides. The lady ought not to disregard the good advice of her friends; and as the Captain's object appears to be money, he is likely to be disappointed in his expectations should he marry without the old Banker's consent."

"But you must allow, Mr. M' Neil, that parents ought not to oppose the wishes of their children in so serious a matter as matrimony."

"Why, my dear madam, I can only allow the truth of your observation, in a very qualified sense. I am aware that parents sometimes oppose the inclination of their children from a cold and interested motive; but in general, we must remember that the care and caution which they exercise is purely dictated by the most affectionate solicitude for the best interests of those who are so dear to them.—The old Banker, for instance, (making some allowance for his love of trade and city prejudices) has but one object in view with regard to his daughter,—the advancement of her happiness; and he thinks *that* would be best secured by her marrying a man of worth, who has no taste for the vices and follies of fashionable life. It must not be forgotten likewise, that ladies frequently bestow their affections on persons every way unworthy of them, and this without any inquiry into the character or qualifications of mind of the favoured individuals. I know that it is impossible to mark out a plan for loving by rule; yet I think young ladies might as well not wear their hearts upon their sleeves, that every hollow speculating adventurer may ascertain their warmth or susceptibility. Seeing, then, the fair beings around us continually disregard reason and prudence in these matters, it is quite desirable that their friends should be watchful, and when necessary point out the folly and imprudence of a blind attachment."

"Well, really, Sir, I cannot answer your matrimonial sermon, but it seems to me that you would have us pursue the same heartless calculating system which is adopted by gentlemen."

"A little more of this trading quality, Miss Firman, would certainly enable you to meet us on our own ground, and perhaps it would frequently save you from being the dupes of base and designing men. You will excuse my haste this morning, for I must make an instant and diligent perusal of the army list."

M'Neil was not very successful in his inquiries during the day; and in the evening he again visited Lisette, for the purpose of obtaining, if possible, some further information which might direct his exertions into a successful channel. Northley accompanied him to the hotel, at the same time declaring that he had no curiosity whatever about the affair, believing as he did that the story was a mere invention.

Lisette received M'Neil with great anxiety: she had fondly calculated on his being able to trace her husband, and it was with grief she heard him declare that he had not yet been successful; and when asked whether she could give any further information relative to her husband's family, and the regiment to which he belonged, she looked around her with a vacant stare, and lamented that she had not examined his papers before her departure from Versailles. The want of hope which she saw depicted in her friend's countenance filled her with apprehension, and overcome by her feelings, she wept bitterly. At this moment she took a miniature

from her bosom, and pressing it passionately to her lips said in a subdued tone "My dear Henri!" In replacing the portrait in its sacred depository next her heart, it fell on the ground; M'Neil stooped to pick it up—and in returning it to the lady, he recognised the features—a momentary conviction flashed across his mind, and rising from his seat, he exclaimed—"Surely, Madam, this is not your husband?" She had scarcely time to reply, when he added—"I understand it perfectly—no time is to be lost—your husband, Madam, is—But I will see you early in the morning."

M'Neil instantly rejoined his friend, to whom he related the circumstances attending his interview, and his strong conviction of having discovered the husband of Lisette.

"And who is this Captain Cameron?" asked Northley. "The very man, Sir, who is at this time endeavouring to obtain the hand of old Dibble the Banker's daughter—But we must prevent it—"

"With all my heart, Bob—and the citizen's stock may be transferred into my name—I've no objection to the daughter—The girl we dined with at Clapton the other day!"

"The very same;—now I have learnt that this Captain will be at the Banker's house to-morrow, and I think it will be an excellent plan to spoil his sport by introducing his wife to him at old Dibble's table."

"Agreed—an admirable scheme—you shall be master of the ceremonies; and after pairing the Captain and his poor Lisette, you may pair Emily and myself;

The old man is rich, and perhaps would have no objection to me—I have an “Honourable” before my name, and if he will support it for me, I shall be very much obliged to him, for I am not able to do it myself. Faith! I think I see a wife in the distance! Bob, my good fellow, I am yours.”

“Well, Northley, I won’t promise to secure you the lady; but if I can remove the Captain, the stage will be clear.”

“Why, that’s a doubt—for perhaps you have an interested motive yourself in all this anxiety to bring the Captain and Lisette together; and if so, why I’ll promise not to disturb your views.”

“Upon my soul, Northley, you are very kind; but Emily is yours, if you can win her—I have no design whatever either upon her heart or fortune.”

The next morning the two friends procured a coach, and prevailed upon Lisette to accompany them to Clapton. She did not hesitate to take this step, when M’Neil spoke of the great probability of being able to restore her to the protection of her husband. The party reached Mr. Dibble’s house at the very time when the family were at dinner. The Banker was at home, for he had at last been induced to sit at the same table with the Captain.

“Is your master at home?” said M’Neil as the servant came to the door.

“No, Sir!” replied John.

“Why surely, he has company, and is now at dinner—Is he not?”

"That's true, Sir, but he is engaged."

"Well, give him my name, and say I shall esteem it a very great favour if he will say one word to me."

John left the door to convey this message to his master, and M'Neil and Northley quickly followed him, supporting Lisette. The dining room being on the ground floor, the old Banker had only time to reach the door when he was met by the intruders.

"A very unexpected visit, gentlemen, upon my word. But walk in, I believe I have seen you both before. But this lady?"

"Is Captain Cameron's wife," exclaimed Bob, without further hesitation, as he turned towards the gallant soldier, who stood speechless by the side of Emily.

"There, Sir!" said Northley, conducting the fainting wife to her husband, "you know this lady, I dare say, and I give her into your protection: it is right you only should support her." As he said these words he gently withdrew the lady's arm from his, and reclined her against the Captain, who was thus obliged to bear her up.

Whilst these things were passing, the Banker and his family looked on in silent astonishment; but when M'Neil and Northley had yielded their charge into its proper keeping, and were preparing to take their departure, the old gentleman took the former by the hand, and said "Gentlemen, this is a strange affair, you must not leave so quickly. Pray be seated, and explain."

The Captain had not yet moved from his first position—he seemed almost unconscious of every thing around

him, except the observation of the Banker, that "perhaps it would be well to support the lady into another room." He took this hint, and withdrew as quickly as possible without saying a word.

Emily had left the room a few moments before him, and Mrs. Dibble followed her, exclaiming, "This must be a vile conspiracy against Captain Cameron."

The Banker then called upon Northley and M'Neil for an explanation of the scene which had so suddenly been played in his house; and it was accordingly given to him. The old gentleman did not entertain any respect for the Captain, and therefore he gave credit to the story without starting a single doubt; indeed he was so anxious to believe every word of the narrative, that he frequently interrupted M'Neil in his relation, with "Oh, I see how it is—the villain deserted his wife." And then he warmly expressed his thanks to his guests for their exertions, which had preserved his family from so much shame and degradation.

In the meantime the Captain and Lisette were in an adjoining room; the former deeply mortified at the merited exposure of his conduct, and the latter manifesting all those feelings of affection which she entertained for her husband. To say the truth, the Captain was not so base in mind as his treatment of Lisette gave reason to suppose; nor did he quit Versailles with the intention of deserting her; but he was young, and naturally extravagant and thoughtless, and the world with its fascinations sometimes tempted him to the commission of acts, of which his heart entirely disapproved. On his arrival in

England he met some of his old companions, who rallied him on his sobriety, and gradually led him again into the same excesses to which he had for several years been a stranger; and whenever he spoke of returning to his wife and children at Versailles, they ridiculed him still more, and used every art to divert him from his purpose; they argued strongly on the impropriety of forsaking his country for a romantic French girl, and of giving up the opportunities which a life of fashion held out to him. Even his family urged him to remain in England and forsake Lisette, who (they insisted) could not be considered as his lawful wife. Thus assailed on all sides the Captain lingered in the metropolis, and postponed from time to time his return to France; till at length he almost forgot that he was a husband and a father; and when we have once been induced to turn aside from the path of rectitude and honour, the opposite course lies invitingly before us; and after taking the first few steps, how seldom do we look back to the fair point from which we started!

But now that the Captain again beheld his Lisette, as faithful and affectionate as ever, weeping upon his breast for very joy that she had found the object of her search, all his old affections rushed about his heart, and transported him in a moment to his home at Versailles.

About an hour had elapsed since his arrival at the Banker's, when M'Neil requested that he might be shewn into the room to which the Captain and Lisette had retired. It occurred to him that the former might be anxious to leave the house without again meeting

its inmates—a meeting which, under circumstances, could not be very pleasant to any of the parties. Bob therefore introduced himself to the Captain, and after a few words of apology, delicately offered him the use of the coach to town which had conveyed himself and his companions to Clapton not long before. The Captain was agitated by too many feelings to permit his entering into conversation with M'Neil; he, however, briefly thanked him for his offer, and shaking him quietly by the hand, said, "You must not judge me too severely."

"Indeed, I do not," replied Bob, as he accompanied the Captain and Lisette to the coach, and took his leave of them.

* * * * *

Shortly after this affair, in which he played so prominent and useful a part, M'Neil accepted the invitation of Dr. Bristley, an old college friend of his father's, who resided at his living at Somersetshire. The Doctor accompanied his invitation with the promise of a hearty welcome, good cheer and plenty of hunting; "things," he added, "which, as a true M'Neil, you must know well how to estimate and enjoy." The Doctor was a married man, without family; his vicarage was good, and his congregation small. In early life he had been private tutor to the present Lord Reston, and this circumstance procured for him that which he most needed—preferment. He was a good scholar, and a gentleman somewhat of the old school: he led a learned inoffensive life, and did not press hard upon his parishioners for

their tithes. This latter circumstance made him a great favourite with many ; but there were a few in his village who complained of his inactivity as a minister, and of the slight interest which he took in the religious instruction of his flock. The fact was, the Doctor never urged strong doctrinal points from the pulpit, or made it a study to shape and fashion the faith of his hearers ; he preached charity and loving-kindness continually, and in his daily intercourse with his parishioners, endeavoured to promote peace and good will amongst them. But more than this he did not do. It was his constant observation, when the subject of religion was introduced before him, "I'll strive to make *my* congregation *practically* religious ; the *theory* I leave to my more evangelical neighbours ; it will be quite enough for me, to see those around us virtuous and happy." And to say the truth, he was eminently successful in preserving a kind and social feeling throughout the village.

The stage pulled up at evening near a long avenue of ancient elms. The Doctor, a tall dignified looking personage, was at the gate ready to receive his guest, to whom he was yet a stranger. "That's the Vicar," observed the coachman to his companion on the box, as he confided the reins and whip to his custody, and proceeded to assist the guard in respectful attentions to M'Neil and his luggage.

"Welcome, my good lad ; I see you're the son of my old friend," exclaimed the Doctor, as he heartily shook the young man by both hands, and conducted

him down the avenue to the vicarage house. "I would that your father were with us now: and is he well?"

"I heard from him a few day since," replied Bob, "and he was then in good health. He enclosed a letter for you, Sir, which I have now the pleasure of delivering."

"Thank you, thank you—ah! we had many pleasant days together about forty years ago."

They had now reached the house, and the Doctor introduced the young man to his lady, as the son of one of his earliest and best friends. Mrs. Bristley was an affable lady-like woman, who soon made her visitor quite at home, and was evidently much pleased at the opportunity of exercising the offices of hospitable friendship.

The Doctor in the meantime pulled the letter of his friend from his pocket, and adjusted his spectacles. "You'll excuse me," said he, "for a few minutes; but I have not received a letter from your father for more than a dozen years, and therefore I cannot delay breaking the seal." He read the first page with the deepest attention, and was evidently much affected at its contents; but after turning over the sheet, and proceeding a little further, he hastily ran the fingers of his left hand through his venerable locks, an act which always proved that his feelings were powerfully interested. He then unconsciously read aloud, "with so large a family, my sons must make their own way in the world, and I trust they will do so with honour. A father's feelings, my dear friend, are anxiously alive when he hopes and fears for his children. One of my boys I now introduce to you; I am sure you will

be a friend to him for my sake ; and the greatest good you can bestow upon him will be, by teaching him to feel the truth and beauty of those honourable sentiments with which in early life you inspired his father."

Mrs. Bristley and M'Neil were silent whilst the Doctor was reading. As he concluded the sentence, he hastily took the hand of his young guest, and brushing away the tear that stood on his venerable cheek, exclaimed, in a tone of true feeling:—" You shall never want a friend, my boy, for your father's sake."

M'Neil was much gratified, and he had every reason to be so, with the kind attentions of his new friends, who promised him, on taking leave for the night, an opportunity of enjoying all the pleasures which their village could afford. " And to-morrow," said the vicar, " we'll begin by making a circuit of the parish."

After an early breakfast, the Doctor and M'Neil set out on their walk through the village ; and though its inhabitants were few, the majority of them belonged to the better order of society. The healthful nature of the spot, combined with its picturesque beauty and local advantages, made it an extremely desirable residence for the lover of retirement, and the man of limited fortune. In the neighbourhood, were several capital mansions, the owners of which kept up a friendly intercourse with the Doctor and a few of their more retired neighbours in the village.

As M'Neil and his friend approached a neat white cottage, which arrested attention from its singularity and elegance, they observed an elderly gentleman hob-

bling up and down in front of it, bearing in one hand a whip, at the end of which was fastened a piece of black crape, and in the other a stout cane, which enabled him to drag along his old and gouty limbs.

"Good morning, Major," said the Vicar, shaking the singular-looking ancient by the hand, "you are out betime to-day."

"Yes, my good friend, I am waiting for our neighbour Killigan, whom I am resolved to horsewhip, if I walk here every day of the three hundred and sixty-five."

"I am sorry, indeed," rejoined the Doctor, "that you and our friend are not reconciled to each other; there are but few of us in the village, and it is a great pity that we cannot live in peace."

"Why that's true enough," said the old officer, whose half pay did not appear to be worth a year's purchase, "but that d——d old physician insulted me at Sir William's, and I'll have satisfaction."

"Well, Major, I must talk to you when you are more charitably disposed, for the present, good morning."

"That old soldier," continued the Doctor to M'Neil, when they had passed on a few paces, "is a kind, good-hearted man—one more so, it would be difficult to meet; but he is extremely proud and passionate, and a few days since, being at the table of Sir William Wilton, whose house is in yonder valley, he took offence at some remarks of our physician Dr. Killigan, which he conceived to convey a censure on the army. It was in vain that Sir William and myself endeavoured to

pacify him—he threw a glass of wine in the Doctor's face, and sent him a challenge the next morning by the hands of the village barber, whom he was compelled to use for that purpose, for want of a gentleman to carry the message. To this invitation Killigan refused to attend; and ever since, the Major has walked before his dwelling two or three times a-day, with a horsewhip in his hand dressed in crape. This trimming, he says, is to signify that the whip mourns for an opportunity to greet the Doctor's back. But Killigan is in no fear whatever; he is a brisk old man, not more than sixty; whilst the Major has turned the corner of seventy, and is a cripple from the gout: so that the former passes to and from his cottage almost before his enemy's face, and escapes the threatened castigation. I have repeatedly endeavoured to reconcile the contending parties, but the Major is hitherto inflexible; however, I shall watch my opportunity, and doubt not of being enabled very soon to make the gentlemen friends again."

In the course of their walk, the Vicar gave M'Neil a sketch of every thing remarkable in the village and its inhabitants, on several of whom they made a morning call; amongst those who were thus honoured, was Michael Thomas, the parish Clerk. Michael, as is customary with men of his profession in country places, combined two or three employments; besides officiating in the church, he kept a school, and was likewise the village musician: in all these walks of life, he was deservedly celebrated; but in none more so, than as a charming player on the violin. Every body who has

seen any thing of a country parish must be aware of the importance of its fiddler. He has no rival in his career—no one to divide with him the profits of the winter season, when every house has its stated dance, and Christmas balls run far into the month of February. At this time, parties are made to suit the arrangements of the Man of Music, who fairly walks about a “charmed” being, at whose very fiddle case the younger villagers stare in silent admiration, thinking all the while of the music that sleeps within it.

Michael Thomas, both on account of his musical genius, learning, and sociability, was a man of sterling reputation; and also justly esteemed for the honest qualities of his heart. He was the constant arbitrator between his humbler neighbours, whenever any difference arose; and laboured in his connection as industriously as the Vicar did in a higher circle, to promote peace and good will.

In introducing M'Neil to Michael Thomas, the Doctor requested the latter to make the young man acquainted with any village sports that might take place during his residence at the Vicarage, and to shew him every thing worth seeing in the neighbourhood. This Michael instantly promised to do with “Proud of the honour, your Worship.” Then turning to Bob, he placed in his hand a bill of particulars of a “famous wrestling match,” which was to take place on the Monday following, about two miles from the village.

“’Twill be a great day, Sir, for our parish,” said Michael, “as the best man out of Devon is coming

here to bear away the palm from us. Some fifteen or twenty years ago, I would have struggled hard for the honour of our village; and I think we have two good men amongst us still who can sustain their fathers' reputation."

"Oh! I'll be there," said Bob, "the very thing I'd like to see." On leaving Michael's cottage, the Vicar expressed his admiration of the manly English sports of the Western Counties, and added, that but for the prevalence of a narrow and illiberal feeling, he would himself witness the match. "This, however, (he continued) I cannot do consistently; for I hold it as part of a clergyman's duty to respect even the prejudices of his neighbours, and not, by a needless opposition to their feelings, on trifling matters, draw down a censure on the Church, though it come from the ignorant or hypocritical. It is my constant object to conciliate all men, provided the doing so does not call for a sacrifice of principle. My taste on every matter is made subservient to the opinions of society." The Doctor forgot at this moment, that there was one thing that no arguments could induce him to forego—I mean the pleasure of hunting; and he certainly must have thought of those who railed against him for following the chase, when he concluded his remarks with these four lines from "Barnaby's Journall:"

"To Banbury came I—Oh profane one!
Where I saw a Puritane one
Hanging of a cat on Monday,
For killing of a mouse on Sunday."

It seems that a taste for hunting came regularly to the possessor of the vicarage, the gentleman who preceded the Doctor having been so much attached to the sport as to give rise to a story which M'Neil put into the following shape. One morning as Bob was exploring the old monuments and epitaphs in the Church, Michael the clerk, in a kind of whisper, drew his attention to a plain neat tablet near the altar.

"That, Sir," observed Michael, "is the monument of the last vicar—I was quite a lad when I first saw him—he was desperately fond of hunting—God knows, he came to a sad end, by all account."

"What, Michael, did he break his neck?—that was so much the better, you know—it gave Dr. Bristley the living a little sooner than he might otherwise have obtained it."

Michael still pointed to the tablet, and M'Neil read the inscription aloud—

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
THE REV. JOSEPH MUG, M.A.
OF
CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD,
WHO WAS
Vicar of this Parish
UPWARDS OF 30 YEARS.
HE DEPARTED THIS LIFE, MUCH REGRETTED,
ON THE 4TH OF MARCH,
A. D. 1746.

Michael solemnly held up his finger at the word "departed," and ejaculating, with a strong emphasis, "Yes ! he '*departed*,'" explained to M'Neil the story of the Vicar's fate.

THE

VICAR AND THE BLACK HARE.

"And it is true—the Devil hath
A knack of crossing in our path,
And taking, as in times long gone,
A thousand shapes to lure us on."

SOME five and fifty years ago,
In his own parish snug,
Lived, undisturb'd by prying eyes,
The Reverend JOSEPH MUG.

He was the Vicar of the place,
And seldom tired his flock—
He made his sermon once a week,
Ten minutes by the clock ;

And always gave this good excuse,
If any friend should say,
On leaving church, "good Parson MUG,
You cut it short to-day :"

"Why, yes—my sermons are not long ;
But then I deem it best
To preach but little at a time,
That it may well digest."

This was a reason sage and good,
But it was not the chief,
That led grave Parson MUG to be
In church so very brief.

There was another—weightier still,
And one of great import—
And it was this—that Parson MUG
Was very fond of sport ;

And being fond of sport, he kept
A choice—selected pack ;
The country all around him knew
His hounds were stout and *crack*.

With these, and a few other joys—
His bottle and his friend,
He pass'd a life, which some would say
Should never have an end.

With these he managed pretty well,
And seldom harbour'd strife ;
He was, in truth, at ease without
A mitre or a wife.

But like most other folks, so MUG
Forgot the day of grace ;
And no men ride their *hobbies* more
Than they who love the chase.

The Vicar was not quite correct,
Bearing in mind that he
Had got the task of curing souls,
To live so gracelessly.

And what would pious people think?
I'm quite ashamed to say—
But Parson MUG, when Sunday came,
Forgot that holy day;

And when the season served his turn,
And he had served his church,
He left, on throwing off the gown,
His "*Reverend*" in the lurch;—

And actually called out his hounds;
I shudder as I write,
And you will shudder as you read,
Or I'm mistaken quite.

Yes, he called out his hounds, and rode
His sure and favourite grey;
And soon, with his old huntsman *Dick*,
Led gallantly away.

But now the drama comes. 'Tis said,
And all the country round
Believe the story to this day,
That when the sportsmen found,

It was not a brown-coloured hare,
But wheresoe'er their track,
They started a strange animal,
And both declared 'twas *black*.

With more than usual strength the dogs
 Coursed this black hare till out :
 But quite in vain—for near the church
 He always took his leave;

And oft they tried on other days
 This self-same hare to find,
 But found him not—of his snug form
 He left no trace behind.

One would have thought this strange affair,
 And what the world would say,
 Had cured the Vicar of his taste
 For hunting on that day.

But when folks once begin to sin,
 As moralists declare,
 They are not soon induced to walk
 In paths more calm and fair.

And “once too often” is a trite,
 But very wholesome saw—
 It truly holds in desperate things,
 In hunting, love, and law.

And thus the Vicar found at last,
 ’Twas an unlucky find,
 When he disturbed this strange black hare,
 And coursed him down the wind.

Says Parson Mus, one Sunday morn,
 To his old huntsman Dick :
 “I’m quite resolved to catch this hare,
 “Though it should be *Old Nick*.”

"With all my heart," the huntsman said,

"And I'm resolved to ride

"Right honestly thro' thick and thin

"Close to your Worship's side."

And forth they sallied for the chase

On that eventful day,

As neat a pair as ever bore

The sporting wreath away.

The Reverend Joseph MUG was quite

A man of five-feet-two—

And stout withal—a rosy face,

And nose a little blue.

His age was fifty;—but Old Dick

Had seen a little more,

For he was getting hard upon

That jolly age—three-score.

And quite unlike his master, he

Was nearly six-feet high—

Rather a herring-gutted man,

And in his manners shy.

Then forth they went—and quickly found

That strange *black hars* again;

And coursed him o'er the boldest hills,

And o'er the fairest plain.

It was, I ween, a pleasant sight,

To see that noble race;

The hounds and hunters bearing on

At such a pelting pace.

But did they reach the hare at last?
 In very truth they did ;
 They ran in to him near the church,
 Behind a tomb-stone hid.

* * * * *
 A moment more, the dogs will seize
 That terrible *black hare* ;
 And both the hunters leap the wall,
 Right boldly in their rear.

But lo! while one might reckon five,
 'Tis horrible to read ;
 The hare hath pass'd away, and left
 The *Devil* in his stead.

Now, at this point, I'd rather draw
 The curtain on my tale ;
 Because I fear the rest will raise
 A very sad bewail.

But what became of Parson *Mug* ?
 Why thus the story goes—
 That from that very day he brush'd—
 But where, nobody knows.

Most people guess. Dick he came back,
 And brought his master's grey,
 But ne'er would tell the rider's fate,
 Or how he pass'd away.

And not a dog was left behind,
 Could any tale be worse ?
 It surely could not; but there's still
 A moral in the verse :—

Reader ! beware of pleasure's lure,
Or torment in the end is sure ;
Dream not of being safe or snug,
But think awhile of Parson Mug ;
For if you ride too bold and fast,
You'll surely reach the De'il at last.

On the morning of the day appointed for the wrestling match, the village assumed the appearance of unusual gaiety and bustle. The weather was exceedingly fine, and every one you met was early attired in his Sunday clothes. The two or three village bells ushered in the day, which was to go down upon the glory or defeat of the primest wrestlers in the parish.

The scene of the sport was a clean, beautiful piece of turf between two neighbouring hills. From time immemorial, feats of strength and prowess had been performed there ; and it thus obtained the name of " The Wrestler's Plain." About eleven o'clock M'Neil reached the ground, and preparations were making for the contest. Several of the neighbouring gentry (and amongst them Sir William Wilton) had taken their stations beneath a small tent erected on a little mound, which commanded an admirable view of the turf. To this spot M'Neil was invited by Sir William, who had met the young man in the morning in company with Dr. Bristley.

Around the plain, and seated on the rising of the hills, were to be seen all the youth and age of the parish. One old man was placed in an arm-chair by the

side of the tent. His hair was silvery white, and the wrinkles of extreme age furrowed his cheek. The greatest respect was paid to this Patriarch of the Village, who was called the Father of the sport. A young girl, his grand-daughter, leaned upon one arm of his chair, and watched the preparations with the deepest anxiety. The women were in as great numbers as the men; for it was not considered at all derogatory to the dignity of a farmer's wife to be present at the manly exhibition.

Before the decision of the "great match," eight fine grown youths from the neighbouring parish entered on one side of the ring, and in a minute or two afterwards a similar number of young men of the village answered the challenge, and took their station on the opposite side. The prize to be wrestled for was two guineas and a belt, but the greatest object of contention was to wear the laurel of victory. These youths displayed considerable strength, science, and agility; and the match was extremely well contested. The candidates on both sides struggled hard, and generally with great good humour; for though they grasped each other with Herculean force, anger was seldom seen upon their countenances, and when the vanquished youth saluted his mother earth, with a most oppressive salutation, the victor but smiled in triumph, and modestly retired.

The exhibition was greatly heightened by the interesting appearance of the spectators, on whose anxious faces the varied feelings were alternately displayed. And none enjoyed the contest more than the venerable

Patriarch, who manifested his approbation at the nimble trips and lengthened struggles of the competitors by raising his tremulous hand above his head.

Michael Thomas was one of the busiest of the busy ; indeed he was the prime director of the sports, and conducted himself with admirable fairness and impartiality in his high and responsible situation ; for deeply as he felt interested in the success of his village pupils, he appeared to forget his predilection during the contest, giving to all the same aid and encouragement.

It was amusing enough to look round the circle during the interval between the different contests : groups were seen here and there anxiously engaged in speculations on the issue of the match, or in elaborate disquisitions on the science itself. At every opening, boys were early beginning the practice of an art, for which their fathers were so celebrated, and in which they already felt it was the height of excellence to be great. And there were soft and winning smiles for the young men who struggled in the game, and fond ingenuous hearts, beating quick, and rising high, as some favoured youth was engaged in the doubtful pastime.

"Glorious sport, this," said Sir William Wilton to M'Neil, as a brawny candidate for fame shook the very ground as he fell, "this is the way, Sir, to form a brave, healthy, and active peasantry ; it is a bad taste and a worse policy, that would discountenance such exhibitions—such trials of skill and strength as these."

"Certainly, I must agree with you, Sir William— (replied Bob,) that the practice of this game is calculated to improve the health, and keep alive a manly feeling amongst the peasantry; and there can be no reasonable objection to the sport when it is conducted with so much order and regularity as I see around me."

"You are very right, young gentleman, that's a sensible observation of yours: the Vicar and you must dine with me. Only look—that's a fine wrestle—faith! they're two good men."

"Ah, those are the fellows," said the old Major to his once inveterate enemy, Dr. Killigan, (for these two worthies had become friends again over a bottle of Port at the Vicarage) "those are the lads, Doctor, I should have liked in my company some forty years ago; boys who'd drink and fight, and want no physic, Doctor—eh!" And the veteran flourished his cane as he spoke to his friend.

"It often surprises me," observed the doctor, "that more accidents do not happen from this desperate game—no bones broken—"

"Bones broken! the devil a bit," rejoined the Major, at the same time taking a tremendous pinch of snuff; "who but a doctor ever thought of bones being broken at a fair game?"

"Why, a few years since, I myself saw a young man have his hip put out by a desperate fall."

"I don't believe a word of it," cried the Major, "a piece of humbug of the doctors, as sure as I live."

"That was an accident," observed Sir William, "the ground was damp, and the young man slipped awkwardly down—it wasn't a fair throw."

"I believe it wasn't," said Killigan.

"To be sure it wasn't," exclaimed the Major.

A very partial shout from one side of the ring, where the friends of the young wrestlers from the neighbouring parish were stationed, announced that victory had for once deserted the pupils of Michael Thomas. The relatives of the vanquished youths looked very sorrowful at one another, and nothing but the preparation for the great match prevented them from audibly expressing their mortification.

The great match was for five guineas; and two excellent Devon men had travelled twenty miles but a few days before, that they might be ready for the contest. To these were opposed, Michael Thomas's two favourite pupils, on whose skill and bravery the honour of the village now depended. Their names were Job Stampor and Isaac Willis; neither of these young men had yet seen more than twenty summers; they wore a fine healthy appearance, and looked like beings expressly formed for becoming most unruly customers. The Devon men were somewhat older, and more practised in the game; in their own county the names of David Cann and William Blundell stood deservedly high; and whenever the young men talked of wrestling, honourable mention was sure to be made of the family of the Canns.

All was now ready, and the men drew lots for

their competitors; the result opposed David Cann to Isaac Willis, and Job Stamper to William Blandell. The two former stepped first into the arena: a deep silence ran round the ring, and every eye was fixed. The young men took their position with a determined confidence, and after cordially shaking each other by the hand, set to: their fine athletic appearance formed a perfect study. Willis was nearly six feet in height, muscular, and closely knit together. His worsted hose, tight leather breeches, and striped waistcoat, with a small dark blue handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, were in excellent keeping with his character. Cann did not present so perfect a picture; he was not so tall or well made as his opponent, and one of his legs was slightly bowed, but still his frame denoted great strength, and it was impossible to survey his broad Herculean chest and shoulders without forming a perfect idea of the strength of his arm and the tightness of his grip. Indeed when the combatants seized each other, it seemed as if nothing could make their hands forego the fixed and resolute hold. It was very soon apparent that David was the most accomplished wrestler; as a tactician he was excellent, equal in his way to Mr. Scarlett, at *nisi prius*, or Mr. Canning in the House of Commons, and infinitely their superior in vigour of style and elegance of

* The game was, the best three out of five throws. I have only given a sketch of the last or deciding throw of each wrestle.

action. He was opposed to a steady cautious man, full of determined courage and rude strength, and several times did he strive in vain to obtain the mastery by the exercise of science; the coolness of Isaac, however, prevented surprise, and for some time the match continued doubtful, but at length a desperate struggle took place, the combatants grasped each other tighter than before, and their muscles swelled with determination. The eye of Cann was one of the quickest and finest ever placed in a man's head: not a turn or point escaped its glance, and action followed with the rapidity of lightning: with all these qualities, he would have been invincible; but that, naturally enough, a great deal of what he possessed of quickness was neutralized by the want of coolness and decision. The contrast therefore between the competitors was strikingly and beautifully illustrative. But science in this instance triumphed—the caution of Isaac forsook him for a moment, and in the next he was on the turf. A subdued moan ran round the ring, and the brave but vanquished fellow turned with a hurried glance towards the Patriarch's chair. "You have done well," said the old man, as he pressed him by the hand, "it is no disgrace, my boy, to be thrown like that."

Sir William instantly stepped into the circle, and conducted Isaac to the tent; "Don't be cast down, young man," observed the Baronet, "you are a fine fellow—I never saw a better match; *you'll* win another day." He then called the conqueror to the tent, and the two brave men refreshed themselves

together, whilst Stamper and Blundell prepared to commence the sports.

The latter stepped into the ring with much confidence, inspired by the signal success of his companion; a short pause ensued, and Job was anxiously looked for; he was standing near the old man's chair; and just as he stepped forward to meet his antagonist, the sweet girl who was beside him tied her kerchief lightly round his neck, and leaning on his arm, looked him a thousand gentle wishes. The Patriarch shook him by the hand, and said in a low tone, "the credit of the village rests on you, my brave lad."

This wrestle was not so well contested as the previous one; and it was evident from the beginning that Job had much the advantage. In point of size, the combatants were very nicely matched, both being about five feet ten inches in height, and proportionally stout. On setting to, there was the greatest possible contrast between the men—Blundell went to work gaily, and full of smiling confidence; whilst Stamper quietly, and with grave determination on his countenance, grasped his antagonist; for some minutes, the former figured away briskly and made several very nimble trips; but they were totally ineffectual when opposed to the resolute play of Stamper, who, it was evident, felt the responsibility of his station, and carefully avoided giving the slightest chance away. Blundell was making one of his merry wrestles, when a Devon man observed to Michael Thomas, "That's shewing you some pretty play." "But not the play to win the

Same," said Michael, and addressing himself rather impatiently to his pupil, he cried, "Now, Job, 'tis time to throw him." Job instantly attended to this hint, which put his cautious play to flight; and gathering himself together with an amazing power, he fairly lifted his antagonist from the ground by main force, and stretched him triumphantly on the turf.

"A beautiful throw!" exclaimed Michael to his neighbour, the Devon man, "that's how *we* play the game."

The victor immediately advanced, amidst the cheers of his friends, to the chair of the Patriarch; a smile was there, more valuable than all the honours and applause that greeted him elsewhere; and a tear of joyful triumph stood in the young girl's eye as she heard her grandfather address the young man thus—"You did it bravely, my good lad!"

The match now lay between David Cann and Job, decidedly the best men of both parties. This circumstance excited a lively interest, and calculations around the ring became more serious and earnest than ever. Sir William and his friends in the tent paid every possible attention to the wrestlers; and whilst Stamper refreshed himself previous to his contest with the Devon victor, two or three youths, whose wrestling blood had been put in motion by the scenes of the morning, amused themselves with measuring their length on the grass, to the great diversion of their more scientific neighbours.

The spectators quickly took their stations, and not a

tongue was heard. Cann had entered the circle, and took his station in the centre. He was instantly followed by Stamper from the opposite side of the ring. Sir William, the Doctor, M'Neil, the old Major, and the other gentlemen who had the *entré* of the tent, deeply shared in the general feeling, and pressed forward to the nearest part of the ring. Michael Thomas brushed from his brow the perspiration that his anxiety had occasioned, and the men set to.

It is impossible to conceive a more perfect picture of calm determination and finished science than this contest exhibited. Cann had carefully surveyed the last wrestle, and profited by the lesson which it held up to him. He perceived that his antagonist was both quick and steady, and fairly concluded that his only chance of victory was by combining more caution with his skill. Stamper, on the other hand, made an equally correct estimate of his man; whose great defect, he knew, was an occasional want of temper. During the first ten minutes, the struggle was a beautiful and passionless piece of wrestling, and it was impossible to say on which side lay the advantage. The Devon man had hitherto made most play, and his object was evidently to lead his opponent into the active offensive; but the latter felt that *his* time was not yet come, and he contented himself with stopping and checking at every turn. Cann had made some of the most elegant points, and exhibited all the characteristic excellencies of his art; so masterly was his play, that Sir William and his friends in the fullness of their admiration, fre-

quently exclaimed, "Beautiful! beautiful, upon my soul!" At length the temper of Cann partially forsook him; he was completely worried by the play of his opponent, and displayed his feelings by making one or two random and incautious hits: this served as a friendly hint to Stamper, who immediately put aside his defensive play, and led off in a daring and resolute style; this change, however, restored the caution of Cann, and the wrestle assumed an unexpected air of vigorous science, which rendered success more than ever doubtful. At this moment, the spectators were straining forward in a breathless state—Stamper had slightly lost his balance, and Cann had him dangerously on the hip; victory appeared certain, and the Patriarch, in an agitated state, raised his hand to his forehead: but he had scarcely time to do so, when a deafening shout filled the air: Stamper, by a last desperate effort, recovered his firm footing, and with the most astonishing quickness, returned upon his opponent, and threw him to the ground.

The victor was received by his friends with every demonstration of enthusiasm, at the same time that they evinced the greatest good feeling for the vanquished. Scarcely had the match been decided, when the old man's grand-daughter rushed into the circle, and throwing her arms around the neck of Stamper, powerfully displayed the strength of her affection. The old man, too, was no less animated by the sound of triumph—he rose with difficulty from his seat, and taking off his hat, received the Champion of the Village uncovered.

Michael Thomas stood near the chair, and shook the conqueror lustily by the hand.

Job was evidently disturbed by the numerous congratulations of his friends; and she whose smile he valued more than all beside, was still leaning on his shoulder, when Sir William announced that refreshments would soon arrive from the Castle, that the evening might be passed by the villagers in cheerful enjoyment.

Bread and cheese, ale and cyder, gave a substantial and merry finish to the sport; and before Sir William and his friends retired, the Baronet gave his annual toast—"Success to the manly exercise of Wrestling!" *

* Wrestling has of late years considerably declined, a circumstance greatly to be regretted when we consider the effects of so meanly a sport upon the habits and character of the peasantry. It is worth remembering, that the ancient Britons, who were dexterous, hardy, and brave, in an eminent degree, followed the most athletic amusements, such as, wrestling, leaping, running, riding, throwing the stone, swimming, &c.; and the Mareschal de Fleureux gives us a brief account of a Royal wrestling match, which took place in 1520, between the King of France and Henry the Eighth of England, during the magnificent feasting and tournaments that followed the pacific meeting of the two monarchs on the Field of Cloth of Gold, between the towns of Guisnes and Ardres. The Mareschal was present at this Royal interview, and says:—"After the tournaments, the French and English wrestlers made their appearance, and wrestled in the presence of the Kings and the ladies, and as there were many stout wrestlers there, it afforded excellent pastime; but as the Kings of France had neglected to bring any wrestlers out of Bretagne, the English gained the prize. After this the Kings of France and England retired to a

A few days after the wrestling match, Sir William invited the Vicar and his young friend to the Castle; the Doctor was greatly pleased at this circumstance; "for," said he to Bob, "the Baronet is a man of much influence, and may be able to serve you another day. He is a very eccentric person, firm in his friendships, and equally strong in his antipathies. With the greatest respect for the feelings and opinions of indifferent persons, he is a tyrant at home, particularly in all matters that relate to the aggrandisement of his family. This pride forms the greatest blemish in his character."

"And has he a large family," asked M'Neil, "to be affected by his severity?"

"Only a son and a daughter. The former is now on the continent; and the latter, poor lady, is still inconsolable for the loss of her mother, who died a few months ago. The girl is so melancholy that she cannot yet be persuaded to mix in company."

"But surely," said Bob, whose curiosity was excited, "Sir William, under such circumstances, does not use his daughter ill?"

tent, where they drank together, and the King of England seizing the King of France by the collar, said, 'My brother, I must wrestle with you,' and endeavoured once or twice to trip up his heels; but the King of France, who was a dexterous wrestler, twisted him round and threw him upon the earth with prodigious violence. The King of England wanted to renew the combat, but was prevented."

"No, not what he considers so; but for the last twelvemonth he has been continually persuading her to accept the hand of the heir to the house of Reston. I was tutor to the youth's noble father, who is indeed an ornament to our nobility, but his son—I fear he'll but disgrace his ancestors, and never enable us to say more for him than is written of a nobleman in the old Tragedy we read this morning:

"I knew you one-and-twenty and a lord,
 When your destruction suck'd; is't come from nurse yet?
 You scorn to be a scholar—you were born better—
 You have good lands, that's the best grounds of learning;
 If you can construe but your doctor's bill,
 Parse you wife's waiting woman, and decline your tenants
 Till they're all beggars, with new fines and rackings;
 You're scholar good enough, for a lady's son
 That's born to living; if you list to read,
 Ride but to the city, and bestow your looks
 On the court library, the mercer's books,
 They'll quickly furnish you, do but entertain
 A tailor for your tutor, to expound
 All the harsh stuff to you, by what name and title
 Soever they be called."

The Second Maiden's Tragedy.

"A flattering picture of the lady's lover, truly; and I must think she proves her sense by turning from this pup of fashion."

"Certainly, I do not discommend her; but she's stubborn, and while she strenuously rejects the Lord, her father asks in vain to know the youth on whom she

has fixed her liking; for Sir William holds, that a woman never yet refused a noble offer unless her heart had been bestowed upon another."

"Why, Sir, I cannot hold Sir William's creed: surely a lady may dislike a gentleman, though she be not in love with some one else. But really you've made me curious to see this dame; I do confess she must be something more than a mere woman of fashion thus to set so little value on a Coronet, as not to give her *hand* for it."

The party at Sir William's was wholly composed of gentlemen, and M'Neil was disappointed at not seeing the young lady, for he had hoped that by some chance he might get at least a passing sight of her. For a party of elderly gentlemen, however, it was a pleasant one, the Baronet, like most staunch Tories, being proverbially merry and hospitable at table.

The Baronet's hounds were to throw off at a neighbouring cover the next day, and it was arranged that M'Neil should attend the chase. The Vicar could not provide him with a suitable hunter; but this difficulty Sir William undertook to remove; and at seven o'clock in the morning Bob was at covert side mounted on an excellent hunter, which he knew well how to hand over the fences. Indeed so fine a horseman was he that Shakespeare's description in "A Lover's Complaint" is not inapplicable to him:

"Well could he ride; and often men would say,

'That horse his mettle from his rider takes:

Proud of subjection, noble by the swāy,

What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes !'
And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manege by the well-doing steed."

The most trifling accidents sometimes do more for us in life than we are ever able to achieve by watchful care and persevering application ; and so it happened with M'Neil on the morning of the chase ; an unlooked for circumstance caused him to stand well in Sir William's estimation, although before the Baronet was prejudiced against him in consequence of his too liberal opinions at table, and particularly for the pertinacity with which those opinions were maintained. During the chase, however, the Baronet and M'Neil were somewhat a-head of the field, and were both going at a "rasper." "A pretty leap, young man," said Sir William : "have a care." They took the hedge at different parts at the same moment, and the first thing M'Neil observed on getting safely over was the Baronet's horse in advance, and his rider in the ditch. Bob instantly repaired to Sir William, who was more mortified than hurt ; no bones were broken, and he remounted in an instant. The transaction was unnoticed by all but M'Neil, who rode on for some distance with the Baronet, the latter making a number of awkward excuses for the accident, which proved how deeply he felt the circumstance, and how highly he valued his reputation as a horseman.

"I haven't been dismounted before for these twenty years," observed the Baronet, significantly, "and

'tis an awkward thing to be laughed at by one's friends."

"Very unpleasant, indeed, Sir William; but the best riders will sometimes be thrown. However, your friends, I believe, did not observe the accident, and the fineness of the morning prevented your picking up any thing remarkable in the ditch, that might tell tales."

"Well that's lucky, to be sure; but these things get wind, young man; and to be laughed at, at my time of life!"

"Oh! you may rely on it," said Bob, in the true tone of a courtier, "that the accident will never be mentioned by me."

"Well, come, that's a sensible remark of yours, Mr. M'Neil; upon my soul, I feel obliged to you. 'Tis kind indeed!"

The Baronet and Bob were in at "the death;" and the latter carried his complaisance so far as to permit his companion to secure the "brush," though by the smallest effort he might have taken the trophy to himself. When the Vicar and part of the field came up, Sir William looked exceedingly uneasy; and whilst his friends paid him many compliments on his superior horsemanship, he turned in a state of alarm to M'Neil, who could not utter a sentence without sensibly agitating the Baronet's nerves. Bob, however, said not a word of the accident,—not even to his good friend Dr. Bristley; and Sir William parted with him at the Vicarage gate, but not before he had engaged him and the Doctor to a quiet dinner on the morrow.

"Why really," observed the Doctor to M'Neil, as they walked down the avenue of elms, "Sir William seems to be mightily taken with you to-day. I am very pleased to see it."

"He certainly is extremely civil," replied Bob, "more so than he has hitherto been."

"Indeed, I thought he was somewhat prejudiced against you; for after dining with him the other day, he spoke to me rather strongly against what he called your radical propensities, and dogmatical style. But he is a perfect eccentric; and no doubt your good riding has altered his sentiments towards you."

"It may be so," rejoined Bob, "for trifles sometimes do much for us."

M'Neil religiously kept his own counsel about the hunting adventure; and he experienced the benefit of so doing, in the cordiality with which the Baronet received him the next day at the Castle. He was not formal and consequential as before; but shaking Bob heartily by the hand, he led him to the drawing room, and chatted in the most social manner. The Vicar, as was his custom, enquired kindly for Miss Wilton, and desired Sir William to deliver to her a small packet which Mrs. Bristley had committed to his care. The young lady was a great favourite at the Vicarage, and had passed much of her time in the society of the Doctor's wife.

"I will not undertake to convey your letter, Doctor," said Sir William good humouredly, "I believe you will have an opportunity of delivering it yourself: Lucy has promised to dine with us to-day."

"Indeed, I shall be most happy to see Miss Wilton: I trust nothing will prevent my having that pleasure."

"Why, the girl is better, Doctor; but the loss of her mother was a deep sorrow to us all. I'll leave you for a little while, and fetch my daughter."

In a few moments the Baronet returned, accompanied by Miss Wilton leaning on his arm. The Doctor instantly stepped towards the door, and greeted her most affectionately. Bob had risen from his seat, and prepared to bow, when Sir William, taking the young lady's hand, said, "Lucy, my dear, a friend of the Vicar's, Mr. M'Neil." She looked up at the mention of that name, a deep flush came over her fine features, she faintly muttered "Oh God, my heart!" and sunk into her father's arms. The Doctor, alarmed, called out for help, and Sir William gently led her to another room. Bob only remained fixed and silent; that glance he had not forgotten—it was the same that made so deep an impression on him two or three years before, in the stage from Holyhead. Interest and beauty had assailed him since, in a variety of forms; pleasure and ambition had, by turns, held possession of his mind; but he remembered ever, as a thing of yesterday, the gentle tone in which the lady said at parting, "Here, Sir, we shall leave you." Often had he looked impatiently through the throng of fashion, and visited its every haunt, with the half-cherished hope that he might see one fair face again, and once more hear a tongue that had made such music in his heart. In truth, from the first moment of his seeing the Baronet's daughter till

now, her image had been before him; and so powerfully was he affected by this romantic sentiment, that from being perpetually joyous and volatile, he became formal and distant, and a tinge of melancholy gradually came over his character. It was well for him, that on the young lady fainting, both her father and the Vicar left the room for a short time, which gave him an opportunity of recovering himself from the surprise which this unexpected meeting had occasioned. On the return of his friends, therefore, he affected to be composed, and anxiously enquired for the health of Miss Wilton.

"Oh, she's much better," said Sir William. "the girl's nerves are so weak—she hasn't dined in company since her mother's death. But I am anxious to shake off her melancholy, and she promises to join us by and bye at dinner. One would have thought (continued the Baronet, turning to the Vicar) that she had seen your friend before."

Bob felt somewhat confused at this observation; and looked another way with an air of carelessness that spoke a great deal more than he meant to reveal. Luckily, however, the Baronet suspected nothing; and though the Vicar now and then gave him a penetrating look, yet he was secure in his friendship, and therefore had little to fear.

Miss Wilton joined the party at dinner. M'Neil summoned resolution enough to say he was happy to find her so soon restored; she curtsied a reply, but did not look at him. We all know how great the difficulty sometimes is of looking a woman steadily in the face;

and Bob experienced this during dinner, being placed opposite the young lady. It was nearly three years since he had first seen her: she was then about eighteen, and in his eyes the fairest creature he had ever beheld.

She had now attained that ripened age, when all the perfections of womanhood speak with an unobtrusive confidence; and the deepened sorrow that cast a shade over her features, could not hide their beauty; on the contrary, it seemed to give a delicate tenderness to her expression,—and grief and tears display so well the charms of women, that it were most unsafe to look upon them when they weep.

During dinner, M'Neil took the opportunity of occasionally gazing on the loveliness across the table, using all the care he could to do so unobserved. But Sir William unconsciously did much to disturb his neighbours. "Lucy, my girl," said he, "you'll take wine with Mr. M'Neil? and Doctor, you and I will do the same." The lady's hand trembled as she took the glass, and exchanged looks with one whose presence had created so many deep sensations. She strove, however, to appear at ease, and chided herself for feeling so great an interest about a stranger. Women have an abundant power of self-command; and so well had Lucy reasoned with her heart during dinner, that she rose from table with a confidence that surprised M'Neil, and delighted Sir William and the Doctor, who drank a bumper to the better health of the lady, and the former added to the toast, "Her speedy marriage with young Tom Reston." Bob's feelings had

What rounds, what bounds, what course, what stop he makes !'
And controversy hence a question takes,
Whether the horse by him became his deed,
Or he his manege by the well-doing steed."

The most trifling accidents sometimes do more for us in life than we are ever able to achieve by watchful care and persevering application ; and so it happened with M'Neil on the morning of the chase ; an unlooked for circumstance caused him to stand well in Sir William's estimation, although before the Baronet was prejudiced against him in consequence of his too liberal opinions at table, and particularly for the pertinacity with which those opinions were maintained. During the chase, however, the Baronet and M'Neil were somewhat a-head of the field, and were both going at a "rasper." "A pretty leap, young man," said Sir William : "have a care." They took the hedge at different parts at the same moment, and the first thing M'Neil observed on getting safely over was the Baronet's horse in advance, and his rider in the ditch. Bob instantly repaired to Sir William, who was more mortified than hurt ; no bones were broken, and he remounted in an instant. The transaction was unnoticed by all but M'Neil, who rode on for some distance with the Baronet, the latter making a number of awkward excuses for the accident, which proved how deeply he felt the circumstance, and how highly he valued his reputation as a horseman.

"I haven't been dismounted before for these twenty years," observed the Baronet, significantly, "and

they were gazing on its broad light together. Sir William and his friend, deeply engaged in chat, had taken another walk; and during one of those awkward pauses that lovers know so well, a hare suddenly sprung from the thicket, near the lady's feet, and passed before her. The sudden rustle of the leaves agitated her feeble frame, and in a moment of fright, she leaned for support on the arm of her companion. At that instant, she remembered the evening when she leaned there before; and he had not forgotten her gentle words at parting. There was more mischief done by the startling of the hare, in the silence and moonlight, than whole days would have witnessed. It was still enough for a sigh to be heard, and perhaps, in an unconscious moment, one might have escaped from Lucy's bosom, or her companion might have felt her heart beat quicker as she leaned upon him; so he whispered to himself—"Dear Lady, how often have I thought of thee?" Lucy looked confused at this sort of whispering, and said, in a hurried tone, "It is some time, Sir, since I saw you last." Bob pressed her hand to his bosom and would have muttered a reply; but the voices of their companions luckily enough dissolved the charm, and the party returned to the Castle, Miss Wilton and M'Neil anxiously inquiring of their hearts what reason there could be for not looking each other in the face, without feeling a strange sensation; and both, I believe, agreeing that the hare might as well have slept in the thicket, and the moon have shone any where but on the lake.

. In walking home from the Castle, M'Neil was un-

usually silent; and the Vicar certainly had some suspicion, from what he had seen during the day, that his young friend was not so great a stranger to the lady as he appeared to be. He thought, too, that on looking accidentally through the trees, he saw the young lady leaning on her companion's arm; but his eyes might have deceived him—it might have been a fantastic shadow in the moonlight. However, there could be no harm in sounding the young gentleman, and feeling his pulse a little.

“ Well, Bob, you saw Miss Wilton—what do you think of her—handsome?”

“ I beg your pardon, Sir,—Miss Wilton?”

“ Yes, the young lady—don't you think her handsome?”

“ Why, really, I can't say that I do—well enough, to be sure.”

“ Well enough, indeed!—she's generally admired for her beauty, though that's the least of her attractions. Several young gentlemen are, I believe, desperately in love with her.”

“ Is it possible, Sir?” asked M'Neil, a little too impatiently—“ perhaps her fortune”—

“ May be a consideration, certainly; but I know one or two who would take her without a shilling. Her mind—her heart, my friend, are superior to half the minds and hearts in Christendom.”

The Doctor always forgot himself when he spoke of Miss Wilton, and he delighted in telling of all her acts of gentleness and charity.

“ Not a cottager in the neighbourhood,” continued

the Vicar, "but in the time of sickness and distress has shared her bounty. She little thinks how much I know of her good deeds. Sweet creature!" (the Doctor had taken a glass or two more than the prudent number) "wherever there is sorrow or suffering—there you are always to be found!"

M'Neil listened with eagerness to his friend's observations, but was silent. The Doctor felt that he had said too much in the young lady's praise, and as it were by mutual consent they left the subject.

This discovery of Lucy Wilton played havoc with M'Neil's peace of mind. He now saw the woman whom he so continually loved, moving in such a sphere of life that little hope existed for a poor man like himself. It was evident, Sir William would never bestow his daughter on any but a man of family and station; and even should the young lady love him, the knowledge of his poverty would awaken her pride, and he would be left wretched.

These were a few of Bob's reasonable and pleasant reflections, which were powerful enough to keep him awake at night, and detain him in bed too long in the morning. It was an additional source of uneasiness to him, that his visit at the Vicarage could not be of long duration, and to leave the country without declaring his love to Lucy Wilton, was more than he could do, but then the difficulty was to get an interview with her: if he called at the Castle, he saw Sir William, and by chance caught a glance of the lady—at church, too, he looked at her more frequently than at the Vicar, and

thought of her at least with as much devotion as of any thing in heaven. Sunday had now become the pleasantest of all days, and Bob sometimes flattered himself that Lucy recognized him with a look of kindness, as she now and then took her eyes from the book, and turned them towards the Vicar's pew. In passing through the church-yard, likewise, he had the high delight of saying a few common places to the young lady, and at the same time blushing awkwardly in her face. But a declaration of love could not be made at such seasons as these; he was anxious to walk again by moonlight, and not be intruded upon by any thing except it was a hare springing suddenly from the thicket.

Thinking that opportunity might aid his wishes, he frequently sauntered near the Castle; and one morning was fortunate enough to meet Miss Wilton, accompanied by her maid Patty. Bob's heart was any where but in its proper place, and he stammered out a graceless salutation. Patty very kindly kept a little in the rear, as Bob and the young lady walked several times up and down a secluded path. Surely in such a place he may tell his mind; a very few words will do it; a short broken sentence or two will be quite enough, and plead more forcibly than a very set and formal speech. For who ever heard of coolness and formality in matters of love?

"I am afraid, madam, (observed Patty, as the young lady turned down the path for the fifth time) that you will walk too much this morning." This was a sly remark, but Patty thought of her luncheon.

"Thank you (replied Lucy); I'll wish Mr. M'Neil good morning at the bottom of the walk."

About a hundred yards, then, will bring Bob's happiness to a conclusion; so he instantly slackened his pace, and made up his mind to speak plainly. "Perhaps, madam, (said he,) this will be the last time I shall have the pleasure of seeing you—I—"

"You are not going to leave the country, Sir?"

"On Monday, madam, I must quit the Vicarage; business obliges me to return to town."

"I suppose, Mr. M'Neil, you do not like the quiet of a village life so well as the gaiety of London?"

"I assure you, Miss Wilton, that I cannot desire any pleasure in London half so great as that which I have experienced during my residence here—and I did not anticipate the happiness of seeing you."

Thus far all went well; but they had reached the end of their walk, and many things remained unsaid. Lucy paused a moment, and expressed a hope that he would visit the Castle when next he came into the country. "Sir William (added the lady) will be very glad to see you."

"And you, Miss Wilton"—and he gently took her hand at parting, but could not finish his sentence; besides, Patty became impatient, and approached to the side of her lady. The chance was absolutely over, and Bob was obliged to take his leave, not at all satisfied with himself for using time so unprofitably. He had only three days more to pass at the Vicarage, and had not yet told the lady that he loved her. In this

dilemma, he at first resolved to confide his case to Mrs. Bristley, and solicit her assistance; but this, upon reflection, he saw would be accompanied with no benefit whatever; quite the reverse; for it was evident that the Doctor and his lady would never lend themselves to any measure that might not be approved of by Sir William. And then, writing to the lady was not the proper mode—letters at best are cold, when compared with actual declarations from eyes, tongue, lips, and all together—and besides, they may miscarry.

In the evening of the day on which M'Neil* had met Miss Wilton in the Park, he was engaged to accompany Mrs. Bristley round the village, on a tour of charitable inspection. The good lady, though she had never been a mother, was sedulously attentive to the wants of her poor neighbours, and without any parade or pretence, did a great deal of benefit, in seasons of sickness and adversity. The ladies of the neighbourhood joined her in this good work, and Miss Wilton was one of the most active.

As Mrs. Bristley took the young man's arm, she mentioned to him that the Vicar intended on the morrow to take him on a business journey to the nearest town. The Doctor had appointed to meet some of the

* It may as well be noticed here that at page 125 M'Neil is called NED. This is an error; his proper christian name being ROBERT; but the parish clerk from whom a certificate of his baptism was obtained made a blunder in the document, which in one instance has crept into print.

wealthiest of his parishioners to make arrangements about the tithes of the Vicarage, and he wanted M'Neil's company and counsel in the business. The latter was pleased at this intimation, and promised to be ready early in the morning. During the walk, Mrs. Bristley remarked the silence of her young friend, and did all she could by conversation to convince him of the regard which she and her husband entertained for him, and of the great interest they felt in his success. Amongst other things, she told him of Sir-William's good opinion, as she had heard it that morning from the Baronet himself. This was highly gratifying to M'Neil's vanity; but when the lady added by way of compliment, that his manners were such as made every body think well of him, and that Miss Wilton had called him a very gentlemanly young man, and expressed her regret that such persons should be destitute of fortune, he seemed for a moment to rejoice in his poverty, since it had produced him such kind and gentle wishes. But it was not wise in Mrs. Bristley thus to tell the youth all that she had heard of him at the Castle; for though she had no reason to suspect what was going on in his heart, the common rule of prudence in such cases ought to have kept her silent.

M'Neil was very little interested by any thing that had occurred till Mrs. Bristley entered a small cottage at the outskirts of the village. An aged woman lay at one corner of a neat clean room, as it seemed, upon the bed of death. By her side sat a healthy-looking girl about fifteen, with the Bible open before her, from

all would be well. But it was clear the Doctor would not have invited the young lady to the Vicarage on any other day than that on which he was to be absent.

It was agreed over night that breakfast should be taken at eight o'clock, and horses be mounted at nine. M'Neil retired to his chamber full of anxious speculations on the best course to be pursued: it was late when he fell asleep, fatigued with the waking dreams, so painfully pleasant, that his lively fancy had created; and when he did sink to rest, his sleep was feverish, and disturbed alternately by gay and gloomy visions, in all of which the form of Lucy Wilton stood before him. She had become a part of his mental existence, and occupied that secret niche in his heart which till his arrival in England had remained untenanted.

“ So thy fair hand, enamour'd fancy, gleams
The treasured pictures of a thousand scenes;
Thy pencil traces on the lover's thought
Some cottage home, from towns and toll remote,
Where love and lore may claim alternate hours,
With peace embosom'd in Idalian bowers!
Remote from busy life's bewilder'd way,
O'er all his heart shall taste and beauty sway!
Free on the sunny slope, or winding shore,
With hermit steps to wander and adore!”

Bob jumped out of bed at daylight, and looked at his watch—he *now* thought of the tithe meeting, and *then* of Lucy Wilton, with her black eyes, eye-lashes, and eye-brows, and the sweet and pensive expression of her intellectual countenance. After pacing his room for some time in an agitated state, he threw himself on the bed,

which she had been reading to her venerable grandmother. Mrs. Bristley took a chair by the bed, and conversed for nearly an hour with the old dame. The scene was new to Bob, and he was powerfully affected by it : the sick woman presented a calm picture of resignation ; she felt that death was not far off, and with a smile laid her withered hand upon the book of God, and said, " I shall die in peace." Her grand daughter wept aloud at the mention of these words, and affectionately pressed her cold hand as it lay upon the book. " May Heaven bless you, my dear child," said the old woman, " and keep you in virtue, and then you will be always happy." The tone in which this blessing was uttered brought a tear even into the eye of M'Neil.

When Mrs. Bristley spoke of worldly comforts, and inquired if she needed any thing, the sick woman replied, that the good Vicar had visited her in the morning, and that the young lady at the Castle had sent her more than she needed. Lucy had just returned from the cottage when she met M'Neil.

Mrs. Bristley shook hands with the old dame, and promised to see her again in a little time. " Miss Wilton is always doing good," observed the Vicar's wife, as she took the arm of M'Neil :—" she will spend the day with me to morrow, and then we can visit the poor old woman together." Bob made a confused and awkward inclination of his head at hearing this, and instantly began to think of some method for staying at home on the next day. Here was an opportunity of the finest description, and if he could but get rid of the tithe journey,

all would be well. But it was clear the Doctor would not have invited the young lady to the Vicarage on any other day than that on which he was to be absent.

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and presently resolved not to leave the Vicarage on any foreign expedition, for that day at least.

A gentle knock at the door of his chamber convinced him that the time of breakfast was at hand; it was also a signal for him to resume his proper place in the bed. He did not answer to the first knock, and almost immediately his nerves were shaken by another, and the kind voice of Mrs. Bristley informed him it was eight o'clock, breakfast on table, and the Doctor ready to begin. M'Neil replied, in a weak tone (and to say the truth the little rest he had enjoyed during the night, and his deeply agitated feelings, enabled him to play his part very naturally), that he was so much indisposed as to be unable to leave his bed. Mrs. Bristley was greatly alarmed at this intimation, and instantly summoned her husband to the room of their young friend.

"My dear boy," said the Vicar in the kindest tone, "I regret to find you so poorly; pray where do you complain?"

That was a question more easily asked than answered, and Bob muttered something about his head, and a fever, and a cold which would soon leave him. The Vicar felt his pulse; and luckily enough, it was far from regular; the patient, however, was alarmed at this test, till his good physician gravely observed—"A high fever—you must not go out to-day."

These words were drops of consolation to him, and his joy was perfect when the Doctor expressed his sorrow at not being able to postpone the tithe journey till another day.

The reader who has ever sighed for an opportunity of saying a few things of more than ordinary import to his mistress will imagine the gratification with which M'Neil heard the Vicar ride from home on that eventful morning.

The window of M'Neil's chamber commanded a view of the avenue of ancient elms that led from the high road to the Vicarage House; and it was natural enough that every footstep amongst the trees should excite an extraordinary sensation in the breast of the sick man. Not long after the Vicar's departure, Lucy Wilton, accompanied by her maid, appeared in the avenue; Mrs. Bristley met her young friend in the walk, and Patty returned to the Castle. I will not pretend to say how uneasy M'Neil became from the moment of Lucy's arrival, or mention the thousand excuses that he framed, in order to obtain one satisfactory enough to justify himself in the eyes of Mrs Bristley for leaving his bed so suddenly; suffice it, that the reason he really gave for getting up was, that he "felt himself much better."

There was one room at the Vicarage called "Miss Wilton's room;" because the young lady generally occupied it during her visits to Mrs. Bristley: it was on the first floor, and overlooked the scenery at the back of the house. The apartment was very curiously fitted up, but at the same time displayed great taste; it was hung round with tapestry of exquisite workmanship, which accorded well with the beautiful gothic architecture of the ceiling. On one side of the room the tapestry represented (as well as tapestry could represent)

a "Holy Family" and the story of "Jacob and Rachel," after the charming picture of Murillo, which may be seen in the Dulwich Gallery. On the opposite wainscot was a copy from Titian's "Venus dissuading Adonis from the Chace," and N. Poussin's "Poet drinking inspiration from a Goblet presented to him by Apollo." There were also two or three saints by Dominichino in massy old frames, which filled up several appropriate niches in the wall. The apartment was lighted from a large painted window at one end, the old oak door being at the other; a beautiful screen of oaken timber, carved in a most elaborate style, crossed the room near the door so as to form a kind of entrance passage. The window opened on a large balcony or terrace, where, in the midst of the sweetest flowers, you might on one side look far into a wide expanse of country, and there repose the eye upon a quiet piece of water, with the dark wooded hill rising as it were from the bosom of the lake. In the distance, the ruins of an old Abbey overlooked a ridge of hills that stretched away into the blue shade; and along the valley, and skirting the smaller eminences, the white cottages gleamed in the sun, and gave an air of peace and luxuriance to the scene. The village church in the mid-ground, with its tower amongst the old trees, and the castle of the Baronet, with its delightful grounds, were not the least picturesque of the objects that adorned the landscape as it could be seen from the balcony of Lucy's chamber. The Vicar's garden, well laid out, was underneath, at the end of which a clear trout

stream divided it from the fertile meadows that composed the Vicarage glebe.

As it may not be very interesting to the reader to be made acquainted with the conversation between Mrs. Bristley and M'Neil, on the rather sudden appearance of the latter so soon after the departure of the Vicar, and which conversation principally related to the young man's state of health, I shall fill up the time between the discovery and what occurred subsequently in the gothic room by copying a letter from M'Neil to a friend in the Temple. This epistle was written on the day before Miss Wilton's visit to the Vicarage; and therefore, if I do not insert it at this part of my story, it has little chance of being read at all.

“ MY DEAR TOM,

“ Thanks for your friendly letter; and be assured that, however anxious I am to prolong my stay at this place, nothing shall detain me from London beyond the time you mention. Your suspicion as to the cause of my attachment to the country is certainly well founded, and I am fairly obliged to confess, as many others have done before me, who have as confidently boasted of their safety, that I am no longer myself; my head and heart are not my own, and reason and judgment are things to which I have become a perfect stranger. There is a mawkishness in this confession which will make me appear ridiculous in your eyes; and indeed, I cannot help feeling myself the full force of the weakness that oppresses me; but in spite of

this consciousness, and in direct opposition to the old axiom that the knowledge of a disease is half way to the cure, I find myself daily getting worse, and have only to cherish the hope that the bustle of town and active employment will be the best medicine. You will laugh, my good friend, when I gravely suggest that the soothing beauties of retirement have done half the mischief, by calming the passions and rendering me alive to all the delicacies of sentiment. It is certainly unsafe to dwell long in the country.—I do not wonder at the love of ease and the absence of ambition that I daily meet with in this quiet village; and I can almost exclaim with the Poet—

“—————Satis est requiescere tecto

“ Si licet, et solito membra levare toro.”

“ But the cause of all this ?” you ask. Briefly, my dear Tom, I will inform you. My journey from Holyhead to London, you must well remember, since you have so often laughed at and rallied me on the sentimental turn that I always gave to that adventure. I felt the full force of your ridicule when you spoke of the boyish romance of falling in love with a lady in a stage coach; and constantly endeavoured to get rid of my sickly sentiment. But I could not succeed—it was in vain that I mingled in gaiety, and coquetted with fascinating women. More than once, I resolved to fix my attention on some lady of my acquaintance, and make a match which would have been alike desirable in point of family and fortune; on one occasion, as you well

know, I went somewhat too far to retract with honour; but I was compelled to do so, for the remembrance of her whom I had seen but once haunted me continually and I am ashamed to tell of the misery I endured.

“Such was my state of mind on leaving town for the quiet residence of my good friend Dr. Bristley; and little did I think that in the seclusion of this village I should find the object of my affection in the daughter of Sir William Wilton. In a word, Tom, I have seen the young lady, and am almost disposed to think she regards me with a favourable eye; but her father is a staunch Tory, good hearted, but proud, and moreover has determined that his daughter shall marry the son of Lord Reston. Besides, if this were not the case, what hope have I?—I could not even tell the lady of my actual situation—of my poverty, and that I am literally obliged to scribble for my existence in something like an ungentlemanly occupation. In truth, even supposing Miss Wilton could be induced to give ear to my addresses, I am not aware of a single argument that could be urged in my favour to the Baronet, except it be that a female of our house (as my father tells) intermarried in the fourteenth century with Sir Lewis Wenlake, an English Knight who was slain at the battle of Poitiers. But this, I fear, will be a sorry recommendation in the eyes of a wealthy Baronet of the present age. I should tell you, my dear Tom, that I had the felicity of meeting Miss Wilton yesterday, in her father's park. We walked together for some time, and I was making up my mind at every step to declare my

sentiments; but my courage absolutely failed me, and I could do no more than formally express the pleasure which I had derived from her society. It may be only fancy, but when I mentioned that in a day or two I should leave the country, I thought her fine dark eye looked kindlier than before; and I am certain that she said *her father* would be happy to see me when I again visited the Vicarage. But it would be madness to hope in such a case. I will return to town immediately, and do all I can to forget my weakness.

“ Now it is, my friend, that I regret having been nursed in the bosom of romantic scenery, which led me early to indulge in those day dreams of the imagination that may have enlarged my heart, but which certainly have weakened my head. It would perhaps have been well, had my youth been passed in Fleet Street or Cheapside, with the Thames to sail upon instead of Killarney; and groves of chimnies to perfect the picture, in the room of the almost enchanting haunts of my boyhood. I might then have possessed a more mercantile soul, and have pushed my way in life better than I can ever hope to do.”

On arriving at the Vicarage, Lucy Wilton almost immediately repaired to her room, where Mrs. Bristley soon joined her. M'Neil took his flageolet, and went into the garden. He did not appear to evince any interest in the movements of Miss Wilton; but took his seat (perhaps without design) in a bower beneath the Gothic window, and played several tunes of which

(in the stage from Holyhead) the lady had expressed her admiration. This induced Mrs. Bristley to speak of the musician, and as a sort of excuse for his being at home, she mentioned his illness. Lucy unconsciously drew nearer the window, and hoped, with more earnestness than she intended to display, that he was not in any danger; and then she added—"I thought he appeared to be unwell, when I saw him—(Mrs. Bristley looked up rather inquisitively; and Lucy was obliged to finish her sentence with)—yesterday."

"Indeed, my dear, (observed the Vicar's lady) did you see him yesterday?—well—it's very strange he never mentioned the circumstance to me."

The young lady turned her head aside, and with an air of indifference looked out of the window till she had recovered her self-command, and then replied—"Patty and I met Mr. M'Neil accidentally in the Park."

A shade passed over the expressive features of Mrs. Bristley, and she kept her eye fixed on Lucy with an unusual earnestness. The latter, however, maintained her composure, and the subject dropped. Still there appeared enough of suspicion in the circumstance, to induce the kind old lady to forego her intention of introducing M'Neil to Miss Wilton: she had proposed, but a few minutes before the mention of yesterday's meeting, that he should read a new poem to them; and Lucy met her wishes by saying she should be delighted to hear it read. Mrs. Bristley now avoided the very mention of the book; and studiously went into a detailed history of M'Neil's family, that her young friend

might know his actual situation in the world, and the difficulties he had to encounter. Lucy listened with great attention to the narrative, and only remarked on its conclusion: "Well, my dear madam, riches are too unequally distributed—I do hope he may succeed without them."

It is probable, that but for an accident, M'Neil might have rambled about the garden, and played his best tunes over again, to no good purpose. He certainly did expect to be summoned to the lady's room, for Mrs. Bristley had hinted about his reading the new poem; how was he surprised, therefore, that the hour of dinner was fast approaching, and the only recognition he had been able to make of Lucy was whilst she stood near the window: then, indeed, she returned his salutation; but whether her look was that of kindness or formality he had not been able to determine, although the question had engaged his anxious attention for more than two hours. He was thus sauntering about in no very enviable state of mind, when a ruddy-looking girl ran into the vicarage, and almost breathless with agitation, exclaimed "Oh, my leddy, dear leddy, come to my mother—she's dying!" Mrs. Bristley heard the voice of the girl, and hastened down stairs: she did not ask any questions, but instantly repaired to the cottage of a poor woman at some distance from the vicarage. M'Neil, who was near at hand, accompanied her to the habitation of the sick woman; on reaching the wicket that led to a small garden, at the end of which was the cottage, Mrs. Bristley withdrew her arm from that of

her young friend, and begged him to make an apology to Miss Wilton for her abrupt departure, and to say that she should soon return.

This was the commission of all others that he would have chosen, and as the reader may suppose he lost no time in reaching the vicarage. As he entered the gothic room, Lucy was standing near the window with the volume of poems in her hand which he expected to have read. He advanced towards her with some hesitation, and she made a kind and rather hurried enquiry after his health; this was a great relief to him, and he delivered the message of Mrs. Bristley in a tone of considerable ease and confidence; but when he had finished speaking, he felt that the hand of Lucy was in his; she had presented it to him as soon as he approached her, and till now, had forgotten to withdraw it. She did so, however, as gently as possible, in order to point out a beauty in the distant landscape. If both, at this moment, appeared somewhat confused, it is only what many young ladies and gentlemen would have been in similar situations, even though they had seen more of the world than Lucy and M'Neil.

It is not to be expected that I should be able to set down all the trifling matters of conversation that passed in the first quarter of an hour after the arrival of the latter at the Vicarage; I know that the lady asked him if such a view would not have furnished an admirable landscape for Claude or our own Wilson, and that he, in reply, pointed out a wild spot in the glen as fit for the pencil of Salvator.

But time was passing on rapidly, and Mrs. Bristley might soon return; he had lost one opportunity of speaking his mind on the day before, and when could he hope for such another as that now before him? so he began to put his conversation into the track most likely to lead him to a favourable point for telling his secret. He had made several choaking pauses, when his fair companion, out of very charity we may suppose, asked him if he would soon revisit the Vicarage?

"It is you alone, Miss Wilton, (observed M'Neil, as he pressed the hand of his companion), that can say whether I am to see this place again. If I may hope"—

"Indeed, Sir, (replied Lucy somewhat agitated) I shall be very happy to see you, and so will my father."

"But may I hope, dear Miss Wilton, that you do not look unfavourably upon me—that your heart is not bestowed upon another?"

The young lady blushed deeply at this question, which at last had come upon her rather suddenly, and leaning on his arm, said in a tone of great kindness; "I shall always wish you well."

I will not pretend to give more (as the lawyers would say) "than the substance and effect" of what followed previous to the return of Mrs. Bristley: the interest of a making-love scene is principally created by gentle looks and smothered sighs; vows half breathed and hopes half uttered; and there was no reason in the world for my young friends making love in any other than the authorized and established mode; this, however, I may truly say, that M'Neil pressed his suit with great ar-

dour and earnestness ; whilst Lucy, on her part, listened with deep attention, and confessed at last that her heart had not been given to another, and that she felt interested in his success.

Mrs. Bristley, having taken every care of the sick cottager, joined her young friend as speedily as possible ; she remarked nothing in the conduct of M'Neil and Lucy, as she entered the room, to excite suspicion, although she could not refrain from expressing her pleasure that the former had so soon recovered from his indisposition. This was a friendly hint to the young man, and he thought it prudent not to get quite well until the morning.

After paying his parting respects to Sir William (who still remembered the unlucky leap), the neighbouring gentry with whom he had become acquainted during his residence in the village, and Michael Thomas the parish clerk, M'Neil received the blessing of his friends at the Vicarage, and returned to town. As he took his seat in the stage at midnight, the good Vicar put a letter into his hand, requesting him to deliver it as early as possible. On reaching the first stage, he perceived that this letter was directed to himself. It ran thus :

“ MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND.

“ I must claim the privilege of more than forty years affectionate regard for your family, to beg your acceptance of the enclosed. I have lately been in correspondence with your father, respecting a plan for

enabling you to give an undivided attention to your profession; and you shall hear from me soon. In the meantime, let me hope that you will pursue the same course which has marked your entrance into life, and in the end you will be rewarded."

A fifty-pound note accompanied these friendly wishes, and was certainly not the least esteemed, for M'Neil had exhausted nearly all his resources by a life of unproductiveness (though one of trifling expense) at the Vicarage. But this was not the only act of kindness which he experienced from his friend. The Doctor, on learning from the young man what his actual circumstances were, wrote to his father, and proposed that between them they should allow him a small annual sum until he had prepared himself for the Bar, and was fairly started in the profession. His father could not afford him more than fifty pounds per annum, to which the Doctor covenanted to make a yearly addition of eighty; and the old gentlemen agreed that with this income, aided by steady and prudent conduct, the youth might live like a proper law student, whose greatest luxury ought to be his books. When the Doctor communicated this arrangement to the young man, he impressed upon him the necessity of economy and perseverance, and conjured him so to use his time that he might realise the expectations of his friends. I will give an extract from the Doctor's letter:

"Your connection with the press, although far from disreputable, is not, as I am led to believe, such an employment as is recognised by the profession at large

as compatible with its character. In plain truth, there is a strong prejudice against men who thus go to the Bar; and it is not for you and me to reason upon the injustice of this want of liberality; we must in some degree, conform to, though we cannot respect, the prejudices of society; and I should regret extremely that your career in after life were retarded by any employment which your want of fortune may induce you to undertake in youth. But there is a more pressing reason than the one I have mentioned for your falling in with the proposed arrangement. In order to become a lawyer, it is indispensable that you should devote all your energies to the acquirement of legal knowledge; and I apprehend, it is totally impossible that you can make *any* progress in this learning whilst your time and talents are wasted in the fatiguing and uncertain pursuit of literature. The next two or three years of your life will be most important ones, for on the use which you make of them will mainly depend your future character and fortune. It is, my young friend, with almost a father's anxiety that I urge you to an industrious and virtuous application of your time, remembering, in the words of Jeremy Taylor, that "life is like a game at tables; the *chances* are not in our own power, but the *playing* them is."

M'Neil, when placed on his new establishment, did not long bear in mind the good advice of Dr. Bristley. He was naturally fond of pleasure, and had not sufficient decision of character to prevent him from following the example of his more thoughtless or abandoned com-

panions. Twelve months, however, passed on, without any great alteration being evident in his conduct; neither had he omitted during this period, to make considerable progress in his studies; for he was exceedingly quick, and acquired much learning with little exertion, but, as we find illustrated by such characters in every day's experience, he wanted perseverance, and thus the duller man became more than his equal.

In the midst of his occasional aberrations from the right path, the letters of his friend the Doctor, and above all those from Lucy, produced from time to time the strongest resolutions against a giddy and imprudent career; for the latter had given him reason to hope that an honourable and patient course would not be unrewarded. Her tenth epistle contained the following passages:

“ Perhaps it is not discreet in me to be so explicit as your letter seems to require; but as you express an anxiety on the matter, I will assure you, that nothing shall induce me to listen to the addresses of Mr. Reston; at the same time, I must candidly declare, that I will never give my hand in disobedience to the will of my father. It was the last request of my mother, that I should never marry without his consent, and no circumstance shall induce me to forget the promise that I made at her death-bed.

“ You express great fear that nothing will lead Sir William to think favourably of you. It is true, that he is very proud, and has firmly made up his mind that I shall wear a coronet; but I am sure he will not force

me into a marriage where I cannot bestow my heart ; and if in a few years you should succeed in your profession, circumstances may conspire to make him think well of you. At present, however, I am extremely anxious that he should not know of my correspondence with you ; and let me entreat you not to visit the Vicarage at present, as I fear it would excite his suspicions. I was greatly alarmed at an expression which escaped from him the other evening : he was urging me with more than his usual earnestness to accept the hand of Mr. Reston ; when I told him of my aversion to the gentleman, and expressed my determination to decline seeing him. This greatly offended my father, and he hastily asked me if I had formed any foolish or indiscreet attachment. His severity affected my spirits, and before I could reply, he took my hand, and said ‘ Pray, Madam, did you ever meet Mr. M’Neil before you saw him here last autumn ? ’ I was obliged to confess that I had met you once before in the Holyhead stage ; he replied, with great agitation, that it was a foolish scheme of my mother’s to travel as she had done, and immediately left the room. Thus, you will perceive the prudence of postponing your intended visit to the good Doctor, for a few months at least.”

M’Neil summoned all his patience, and in pursuance of Lucy’s advice, delayed his journey to Somersetshire for more than a quarter of a year. On this second visit, Sir William received him with less cordiality than he had shewn on taking leave of him some twelvemonths before ; still the Baronet was polite (rather too much

so), and no doubt bore in mind the leap and the ditch ; but he had some fear for his daughter, and at all events deemed it best to keep her as much as possible out of the way of an Irish fortune-hunter.

Lovers, however, usually contrive to out-general those who watch them ; and Lucy and M'Neil seldom passed a day without meeting each other. Occasionally, too, they met at parties ; at which of course the attentions of the gentleman were as guarded as possible, so much so, as to provoke no suspicions amongst the neighbouring ladies ; every body, I believe, was at ease on the subject except Mr. Reston, who looked upon a salutation, the turn of a sentence, or the glance of an eye, with a very uneasy indifference ; for he unfortunately

" Had lights where other folks were blind,

" As pigs are said to see the wind."

This feeling, once entertained by the young gentleman, was naturally encreased by a number of trivial circumstances, too minute in themselves to deserve notice, but which lumped together were sufficient to excite jealousy, and shew M'Neil in the garb of a rival. One incident I shall mention. During the hunting season it was usual for Sir William's hounds to throw off once or twice at a covert near the Castle ; on these occasions the field was generally numerous, the neighbouring gentry making it a point to attend out of compliment to the Baronet, who always regaled his friends with a substantial dinner after the pleasures of the chase. It

was a fine morning, when, as the huntsmen observed, "the scent would lie famously;" and a noble field were early at the covert side; the Vicar and M'Neil were of the party. Shortly after the hunt had assembled, the Baronet, accompanied by his daughter, on her favourite palfrey, came upon the ground. Lucy managed her steed with great skill, and had frequently followed the chase in the lifetime of her mother, one of whose great attractions in the eyes of Sir William was, that she could take almost any fence. As the young lady cantered her proud and conscious steed up to the hunters, the gallant party saluted her with something like a chivalrous greeting. It was the first time she had thus appeared amongst them since the death of Lady Wilton, and when so many caps waved in the air, and so many friendly wishes closed around her, she could not but acknowledge them all by placing her hand upon her heart. During this salutation, the Doctor and his young friend were in the rear of the circle; they had given way to such persons as Lord Reston and his son, the Members for the County, and those for the neighbouring Borough of Pittsburgh, who pressed emulously forward to pay their respects to a handsome and wealthy woman. But Lucy instantly perceived the Doctor, and rode through the circle to welcome him: she gave him her hand with her usual frankness, and returned the bow of M'Neil with a studied formality, accompanied, perhaps, with a look that said "I mean a great deal more!"

At this moment a circumstance occurred of some in-

terest to the parties concerned. The young lady's horse suddenly took fright, and bore its rider swiftly from the assembled hunters. Several gentlemen instantly rode to Lucy's assistance, amongst whom, it will be readily conceived, were Mr. Reston and M'Neil; the latter, however, was the fortunate gallant on the occasion, and came up to the head of the young lady's palfrey in time to prevent its leaping over a ditch, somewhat too wide and deep to be altogether pleasant. He sprung from his horse, in a moment, and with a slight flush on his countenance presented to Lucy her whip which had fallen to the ground: I need not say how the young lady looked, whilst she thanked her protector. By this time most of the field had come up, and formed a circle round the object of their anxiety. The Baronet approached M'Neil, and, forgetting just then his prejudices and suspicions, shook him heartily by the hand. Many of his neighbours would have given their best hunter to have received that single shake of the hand; perhaps they remembered there was something chivalrous in the love of woman, and knew how much a gallant gains upon a lady's good opinion by doing a bold or dangerous action on her account. It is more effective than whole volumes of passionate and sentimental vows, for it gives the lover at once a romantic character, and makes him, what the young lady always wishes him to be, the *hero* of her heart.

This adventure made M'Neil an object of interest in the field, and the gentlemen asked each other who he was, and praised his figure on horseback; he soon, too,

convinced them that he was a bold and fearless rider. The fox broke cover in gallant style, and taking across the Park, leapt the high palings that bounded the lawn, in full view of dogs and men; at some distance from the place which the fox took over, a countryman held open a gate for such of the riders to pass as were afraid of the timber; but they were in sight of a lady, their horses fresh, and the inspiring music of the chase inviting them on. Sir William led the way, followed by the Doctor, sticking religiously to his saddle—M'Neil gave a glance at Mr. Reston, who was a few paces behind him, and cleared the fence. On landing, he observed Lucy at a distance, and young Reston at his heels. "A glorious leap, my boys! (shouted the Baronet), and well taken; only nine of us over!—Have we left any in the ditch?" Sir William's eye just then met M'Neil's, and perhaps he thought of another and less honourable leap.

A quotation is not the worse for being somewhat hacked; unless the reader will think as ladies do by their music when they say—"A sweet thing, indeed!—what a pity 'tis so very common!"—Now the commonness of the quotation shall not prevent my setting down the words of Shakspeare, that

"Trifles light as air
Are, to the jealous, confirmation strong
As proofs of holy writ."

And so it happened, that the running away of Lucy's palfrey, the leap, the look, and the thousand things that

he alone had seen, caused Mr. Reston to sit remarkably uneasy in his saddle for the remainder of the day ; and he already entertained a rooted dislike for M'Neil, a feeling which the latter returned with interest. At dinner, therefore, they looked coldly and suspiciously on each other, the former more than once uttering an oblique and aristocratical sentiment, which M'Neil readily set down as being directed personally to him ; and it was only a few days afterwards that he seized an opportunity of being revenged. The neighbouring gentry were invited by Lady Reston to a ball ; and Dr. and Mrs. Bristley, with M'Neil, were included in the invitations. Mrs. Bristley gladly embraced the opportunity of introducing her young friend to all the rank and fashion within twenty miles of the Vicarage. The Doctor declined the invitation, observing, that though he saw no objection upon principle to a ball, yet such an assembly did not exactly harmonize with his clerical character.

In the words of the *Morning Post*, " the rooms were crowded with beauty and fashion." But the newspaper went further, and set down as follows : " We understand that this splendid rout was given by Lady Reston, on occasion of the re-appearance in public of Miss Wilton, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Sir William Wilton, Bart. of — Castle. This amiable young lady has studiously retired from the gay world since the death of her highly esteemed mother ; and we rejoice to learn that her health is so much improved as to enable her again to mix in that distinguished circle,

of which she must always be one of the brightest ornaments. It is whispered in the fashionable world, that a union will ere long be formed between the Heir to the noble House of Reston, and the young lady alluded to, who possesses in her own right one of the finest estates in the West of England."

M'Neil attended the ball more for the purpose of watching over his interests, than for the pleasure of meeting all the world of the Western Counties; and he was absurd enough to feel disturbed when Lucy opened the ball with his young rival, even though he had found an opportunity of saying to her, "Shall I have the honour of dancing with you this evening, Miss Wilton?" and had received a very consolatory reply, "If it will not look particular—by and bye." This by and bye came, and M'Neil, who was a better dancer than thinker, had many eyes upon him during the display; but a few babbling tongues whispered something like this—"Indeed! I wonder that Lucy Wilton should dance with a person whom nobody knows."

"Pray who is he?" enquired the Hon. Mrs. Spriggett.

"A poor Irishman, I believe," replied Lady Reston, "of no family or fortune. I was obliged to give him an invitation."

"Oh, I dare say he is hunting about the country for a fortune," added Miss Twiffig, whose father had been a grocer in the Borough; "but I should think he has no chance in this part."

"None at all," whispered Lady Mary Western, "and who could have brought him here?"

"He is at the Vicarage," simpered Miss Northley; "I once met him in Town, at the Firmans—Mary Anne thinks him a fine young man; she is in love with him."

"Is she indeed? well, I see nothing to admire about him—he dances well, to be sure, and has a tolerable figure; but is so affected." This was the judgment of a little lady, with an awkward obliquity of eye (some squints are not disagreeable), whose name I could not learn.

The detracting party were rapidly on the increase, every fresh whisperer inoculated her next neighbour at least, and now and then spread the mania both on her right and left. It is curious to watch the progress of a sly hint to the prejudice of an individual in a mixed company. With a little hemming and ha-ing, it is started by the projector in a sober whisper to some garrulous, curious-looking lady between forty and fifty; she thinks of the matter for a moment, embellishes it a little, and sends it on—others re-touch, and colour, with like skill and avidity, the last speaker invariably pronouncing more boldly upon the thing than has been done before; and every felicitous, imaginative being finding out motives and intentions, to the surprise and admiration of the company; thus the *hint* very soon becomes a *direct scandal*, and in this shape it comes back to the projector, who having anxiously watched

the progress of the thing of his (or her) creation, is naturally proud of the work; and gives it the finishing touch.

The detraction of M'Neil extended like the circle caused by a stone thrown into a lake, and soon reached the ears of Mrs. Bristley, who naturally felt indignant at the free use of her young friend's name, and immediately walked towards Lady Reston and the principal knot of talkers, in order to vindicate M'Neil's character. Mrs. Bristley was a woman of high feelings, and quite superior to the little spirits that reigned around her. As it always happens, therefore, with such persons, her appearance silenced for a moment the tongue of detraction; but as if ashamed of being thus awed, she knew not how, Lady Mary Western rudely said, "Here is Mrs. Bristley—she can tell us who this Mr. M'Neil is."

"He is a friend of mine, and a gentleman," replied the Vicar's lady, with great emphasis, as she turned rather hastily from the inquirer.

Whilst this scene was passing at one part of the room, M'Neil lingered near the object of his affections, unconscious of the notice he excited. He was engaged in earnest conversation with her and the three daughters of a neighbouring clergyman, when Mr. Reston advanced towards them, evidently with the design of gaining the attention of Miss Wilton. He was standing somewhat behind M'Neil, when the latter purposely stepped back, and trod violently on his toes; the eyes of the young gentlemen met, and neither looked very pleasantly at the other. No apology was

offered, and Mr. Reston mutteringly retired. M'Neil felt that something else would follow, and as soon as he left the ladies, began to think of a second.

He had scarcely been a moment alone, when the offended gentleman approached him, and said—"I could not insult you, Sir, before ladies; but you are no gentleman, and ought not to be here in that character."

"You are a puppy (replied M'Neil); and nothing but this company, and your father's house, prevent my treating you as such."

"You shall answer that in a few hours," said the young Honourable.

"As soon as you please," rejoined Bob.

At this moment a second presented himself to M'Neil in the person of his friend Northley, who caught his eye for the first time that evening.

"My good fellow," exclaimed the latter, "I am agreeably surprised at meeting *you* here: upon my soul, I am."

"And I, Ned, am indeed happy to meet *you*; I want a friend to serve me on the instant."

"You can command me, my good fellow; you served *me* once, Bob, in offering me a rich wife; and as I live, I believe the Banker's daughter will be mine."

"Oh!—oh! that's the affair, and so you are in love with Emily's fortune—eh, Ned? you know what Butler says, (it applies to maids as well as widows):

' Now artful Cupid takes his stand
Upon a Widow's jointure—land;
For he, in all his am'rous battles,
No 'dvantage finds like goods and chattels.'

"But I have no time for any thing but business." M'Neil then explained the toe-treading affair to his friend, who observed at the conclusion of the story, "It was a gross insult, Bob—rather awkward—Reston is my friend; but I am bound to second you."*

* I cannot refrain from adding my regret, that the practice of duelling should have so much increased amongst us. With regard to people's opinions generally on the matter, it is not far from the truth to say, that nearly all men condemn the practice, and yet, when called upon, adopt it. The good old maiden aunt thinks it a horrid custom, that ought at any rate to be confined to the army: the prudent father moralizes about it to his son, and yet in his heart applauds the spirit that induces him thus to resent an injury. It is well known what the young lady thinks of a duel—the Cornet never looks so well in her eyes as when his arm is in a sling.

The ancient system of determining points of honour was by the sword, and many contend that the present mode (by the pistol) is far preferable; since by it all *personal* contention is avoided—"the honour of each (says a modern writer) being reposed in the seconds, the principals meeting only to discharge that debt which is due to public opinion." Mr. Ruggles, in his *Strictures on the Education for the Bar*, absolutely recommends that the men whom he addresses should acquire a certain degree of skill in the management of the pistol, to enable them to fight a duel scientifically. This considerate worthy thus puts it: "Since the pistol is now, by the fashion of the world, the honourable weapon, a recommendation to the man who must live with the world, that he should not be wholly unpractised in the use of it, cannot be unreasonable; lest, if he unfortunately be engaged in any affair of honour, the ball from his own pistol should, from his unskillfulness of handling, *hit himself*, and give his antagonist ample satisfaction." I need not remark on this advice to our law students, who however, might just as profitably consult their folios, as study how to shoot their fellow creatures.

A message immediately came to M'Neil, who referred the bearer to Northley, and a meeting was arranged for five in the morning. When the parties had taken their stations, Northley made a fruitless attempt to produce an amicable arrangement; but both the combatants were determined, and they fired. The first shot was harmless; but on the second fire, M'Neil received his adversary's ball in the pistol arm: the seconds then interfered, and the parties left the ground, after exchanging words of reconciliation.

M'Neil's wound was severe, and obliged him to carry his arm in a sling. In spite of every effort to keep the thing a secret, the affair got wind, and became the subject of much conversation in the neighbourhood; it was universally agreed that the cause of quarrel was a spirit of rivalry for the smiles of Miss Wilton, one or two of whose recent meetings with M'Neil had been observed, and formed the subject of various speculations about stolen loves, fortune-hunting, and elopements. It was generally believed that Patty, Lucy's maid, had not kept her counsel, and it was very well known that in feeling she strongly opposed the claims of M'Neil: she had many reasons for being anxious to see her mistress united to the eldest son of a Peer, rather than to a poor "Mac," as she sneeringly termed our hero. By the higher alliance, her perquisites and station would be advanced, and she might in a few years rank in the circle of "upper servants," as *My Lady's Lady*. Lucy, however, entrusted no more secrets to her maid than she found absolutely necessary, and this circumstance in-

creased Patty's aversion to M'Neil, although he sometimes gallantly praised her figure, and declared she was as handsome as her mistress.

This gallantry was on one occasion somewhat awkwardly displayed: when Patty on an unlucky morning brought our hero a message from her lady, she was induced, after some persuasion, to make an appointment on her own account to meet him at evening in a secluded walk near the Castle. This was imprudent, the reader will say; and so it was; yet Patty kept her word, and M'Neil was equally punctual at the proper time and place. But

"The course of *true love* never did run smooth;"

and scarcely had Bob fairly seated the half-opposing damsel on his knee, and whispered a few civil things in her ear, than he was disturbed by the uncalled-for appearance of a third person.

"Oh! Lord, (exclaimed Patty) it's my Lady!" And so it was, sure enough; nor did it ever appear what induced Miss Wilton to walk alone in the twilight at the place of all others where her presence was least needed. However, she did not remain long in sight of the offending parties, after she had witnessed her lover so warmly pressing the cheeks of her faithful maid, Patty. This accident brought upon M'Neil the high displeasure of Lucy, which continued for two entire days; but on the evening of the third, she forgave him on the very seat where he had so passionately offended. By what eloquence he procured his forgiveness, I never

could learn; the fair reader must do, (as I have often done) guess about it. This, at any rate, is certain, that Patty instantly ceased to be the bearer of gentle messages.

The story of the duel soon reached the ears of Sir William, who became more than ever alarmed for the safety of his daughter. He instantly thought of every little circumstance that had occurred between the parties, and called himself a dull old fool for not having seen the truth before. On taxing his daughter with the crime of loving M'Neil, the young lady frankly confessed the truth, but declared that she would never marry without his consent.

"And that," exclaimed the Baronet, passionately, "you shall never have. What—what—marry to a poor Irish—beggar!"—

Lucy at length succeeded in soothing her father into silence, and that was all she could expect to do.

In the meantime M'Neil, having stirred up so great a sensation by foolishly treading on a rival's toe, returned to the Temple, fully resolved to work hard, and endeavour to deserve the hand of his mistress. It would have been well for him, had he kept his resolution; but he had lost much of that decision of character which he possessed on his introduction to town, and which induced a calculating old friend to say of him, "He's light enough to sail down the stream, and yet does not want ballast."

His connection with the press had not improved his habits. It threw him amongst individuals who gene-

rally lead a careless and dissipated life, and it required more firmness than he possessed to avoid their midnight orgies. He was unfortunate, too, in the choice of his young professional friends, several of whom, (and Northley was of the number) frequently attended gaming-houses at the west end of the town, and now and then induced M'Neil to accompany them, the state of whose mind, after his last visit to the country, was so unsettled, as to make him easily persuaded to mix in scenes of folly and intemperance.

The sum allowed him by his father and Dr. Bristley had become totally inadequate to his wants; and, in a moment of pressure, he sought the assistance of an adept in the bill-system. Many men may date their ruin from the adoption of this desperate mode of raising money; bill after bill is accepted to meet the rapidly accumulating mass of claims, which is fatally increased by the rapacity of the scoundrel who acts as agent in the business. Once in the vortex, therefore, M'Neil had no chance of escape; and it was perhaps lucky for him that a circumstance occurred which prevented his going on quite so long, and consequently being involved so deeply, as he otherwise might have been.

He had received a very affectionate, though not a very hopeful epistle from Lucy: it was in reply to a letter of his, in which he had laboured hard to prove the propriety of marrying without the consent of parents, provided that consent were unfeelingly withheld. I believe he penned an able argument in support of his view of the case; but it was altogether lost upon the

lady. She repeated the assurance of her unchangeable affection; and then added—"With regard to the measure which you so pointedly endeavour to justify, I can see nothing in it but impropriety; and without in any way attempting to refute your arguments, I repeat, once for all, that I will never entertain it, even for a moment; and the greatest proof you can give me of your regard will be by abstaining from any allusion to a step which I have always felt to be the prelude of unhappiness."

Ladies frequently say and write a great deal more plainly than this against measures which they are afterwards, with little persuasion, led to adopt. But M'Neil knew that Lucy was not a woman of this description: he had often admired her decision of character, and had now no hope of being able to induce her to give it up on a matter of such deep importance as that on which he had exhausted his reasoning powers over nearly a whole sheet of Bath paper.

"Then," said Bob, as he read the above sentences of Lucy's epistle, "I must wait, it seems, until I get the Baronet's consent, and that I shall never obtain until I have made a *fortune at the Bar*." He repeated "a fortune at the Bar!" in a hopeless tone; turned over the leaves of the last number of Reports; and then accompanied Northley and a few friends to a coffee-house dinner.

It was on this evening that M'Neil's pecuniary difficulties frightfully increased upon him: The wine had circulated freely after dinner, and at a late hour the party proceeded to a well-attended gaming-house in

St. James's.* Here were assembled between fifty and sixty peers and men of family, mixed up with notorious blacklegs and dashing fellows "upon Town," whose persons were well known in season about Bond-street, and out of season within the rules of the Bench. French-hazard, rouge et noir, roulette, and un-deux cinque, engaged the attention of parties of the company at different tables, round which stood most of those who were not playing, anxiously watching the progress of the game, and sporting their money on the throws of the dice at hazard, the forty-eight black, red, and blue spots on the large ivory ball at the *un-deux cinque* table, or the cards at *rouge et noir*. As the games went on, the spectators, most of whom had suffered much of their prudence to be driven out of their heads by wine, one after another became smitten with the desire of play,

* I am sorry to say that the Inhabitants of the Inns of Court have from time immemorial been distinguished for their love of gaming. In an old account of the celebration of Christmas in London, it is set down that the lawyers, who frequently entertained the nobility at that festive season, did not pass their time so innocently as the citizens, but indulged in gaming most extensively. Rowley, in his play intitled *A Match at Midnight*, thus makes an allusion to the practice of gaming in the Inns of Court during the Christmas revels: "Worth so much! I know my master will make dice of them; then 'tis but letting Master Alexander carry them next Christmas to the Temple, he'll make a hundred marks a-night of them." It should be noticed that these revels, which were distinguished alike for their wildness and licentiousness, continued from All Saints Day to Candlemas.

and took their stations, and lost their money, accordingly. It gives one but a melancholy opinion of human nature, to watch attentively the conduct and appearance of a knot of gamesters: the desperate and maniac look of the loser, contrasted with the sickly and deceitful smile of the half-drunken winner. Here the smooth blackguard obsequiousness of the proprietors of the "Hell," and there the haggard and melancholy glance of some elderly gentleman, who has just begun to reflect upon his losses and his folly. Even the very waiters, who are purposely busy with the wine, have a character peculiar to the place: keen-eyed, bustling, ready at command, and yet impudently at ease withal, they see a stranger in an instant, and give the hint for his being sounded and plucked with the zeal of rascals who are partners in the concern.

The roulette table was less crowded than either of the others, and M'Neil soon took his station at it. His companions had fallen in with the company at different parts of the room. For some time he contented himself with watching the game, which is played with a small ivory ball in a cylinder; but at last he was induced to risk a trifling sum of money, which in the course of half an hour produced him a large addition of cash. He was now fairly in for play, and could not decline staking whilst he had the fruits of recent success in his pocket. In another hour his sudden gains had left him, as well as the sum with which he entered the room. He then signified his intention of retiring; but his compa-

nions at the table pressed him to remain, and he had taken too much wine to resist their invitation : of course he could play without money, and in a word he found himself at daylight an *honourable debtor* to the amount of nearly four hundred pounds.

A few days after this foolish gambling adventure, M'Neil was pressed by his new creditor for payment of the sum lost. The latter, (who bore a title before his name, as if to shew the world how little such things stand for unless united to an honourable character,) urged the peculiar nature of the debt as a reason for its prompt discharge. Unfortunately M'Neil had then in his possession about 150*l.* which he had raised with great difficulty to meet bills which were coming due. A hundred pounds of this sum he was induced to hand over to the gamester, with his note at three months for the remainder. The consequence of this step was, that when the bills for which the hundred and fifty pounds were raised, became due, Bob was unable to meet them. They were instantly placed in the hands of a low attorney (one of those foul blots on the profession which are so numerous in the metropolis), who lost no time in commencing proceedings; and in the course of a few weeks M'Neil found himself within the Rules of the King's Bench, and had the additional mortification of learning that an execution had been put into his chambers.

We talk of the exquisite pleasure of "*first love*," the fondness with which we cherish our *first impressions* ;

the delight of the Barrister when he gazes on his *first* brief, and the physician while surveying the agonies of his *first patient*. In my boyhood, the *first cut* of a rich pudding, and the *first time* of seeing Grimaldi, were amongst the most pleasurable of first things. And I am thinking that the maiden tap on the shoulder from the gentle hand of a more gentle dun creates a feeling not soon to be forgotten: the reader must not be ready to say "He speaks from experience," although I have written two hundred and sixty-six pages of this present volume, a circumstance which would, I know, be taken as evidence of the fact in some Courts that I could name; for be it always remembered that we who write are privileged to be in love, in war, in prison, or in any thing else, according as our fancy or imagination (since Mr. Wordsworth's definition of fancy and imagination I know not which word to use) may be disposed to direct the way. But speaking of arrests, the learned say of it, as the old woman observed whilst engaged in skinning the live eels, '*Tis nothing when they are used to it.*'

Independent of the mortification to one not used to the operation of being arrested at all, there was a peculiar unseasonableness about the taking of our friend. He had just been called to the Bar, and had announced his intention of travelling the next Circuit, intending likewise to finish the long Vacation with a month's recreation at his good friend the Vicar's. Some interest having been made for him, he had already received two

or three briefs, one of which was given him at the express direction of Dr. Bristley, who was absolutely forced into a tithe action by a few of his parishioners who had seceded from the establishment, and joined a party of Wesleyan Methodists, that held a tent meeting every Sunday in a field near the Vicarage. The Doctor, in apprising his young friend of the forthcoming cause, furnished him with an accurate statement of the question in dispute, together with such authorities and arguments as learning and industry could supply ; and particularly entreated him to study well the case, as although he could be but the junior counsel, yet an opportunity might arise for a display of his abilities, and great good be gained by a preparation that would enable him to embrace it. This letter of the Doctor's reached the young Barrister at his rooms in Princes-place, near the Obelisk : it would indeed have been welcome, had it found him in the Temple.

* * * * *

It was about four years after the lodgment of my friend in the Bench, that I returned to England from the continent, having been absent from my native country from the time of his arrest. No matter what circumstances conspired to make me so great a stranger to it ; but I trust that I shall never again be obliged to remain so long in any other land. It is impossible for me to forget how forcibly the lines of Scott occurred to

me on reaching shore, and I did indeed ask my heart
the questions of his verse :

“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said—
This is my own—my native land?
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burn’d
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d
From wandering on a foreign strand?”

One of the first assurances I received of the remembrance of my friends was brought to me by my old acquaintance the postman, a day or two after I had settled in my rooms. I was luxuriating over a rump-steak (a thing which I had thought of continually during my absence) when the two distinct knocks saluted my ears; and I took the packet from the man of letters with the mingled feelings that I always possess on such occasions: for the same knock has so often announced news of joy and sorrow from dear and absent friends, that I never pay the postage of a letter without experiencing alternate sensations of hope and fear.

The outside of the letter was satisfactory enough: it set out my full style and title: “To ALEXANDER WILSON, *Esquire*,”* &c. &c.; and at the left hand

* I cannot refrain from making a note here, to remark the great increase that has taken place of late years in that class of society, which is called *gentlemanly*. Sir Thomas Smyth makes the following complaint of the growth of mushroom titles in his days (see *Commonw. of Eng.* b. i. c. 20) As for *gentlemen*, they be made

corner was the name of "Robert McNeil." On breaking the seal, I was not displeased at finding a kind in-

good cheap in this kingdom; for whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, who studieth in the Universities, who professeth liberal sciences, and (to be short) who can live idly, and without manual labour, and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called Master, and shall be taken for a Gentleman." What would Sir Thomas say, did he live now? he would find, without being accompanied with any of the "port, charge, and countenance," the title he wrote about, and that of *Esquire* (Sir Edward Coke, by the bye, confounds them both together) as common amongst us as empty purses. The former designation, to be sure, is somewhat exploded, and the latter has become the general mark of honour for all those idle and affected individuals whose fathers were so unwise as not to bring them up to an industrious and useful calling. Camden, the learned Herald, took some pains to define the nature of a *real* and *rightful Esquire*. He makes four sorts, as follows:

1. The eldest Sons of Knights and their eldest sons in perpetual succession.

2. The eldest sons of younger sons of Peers, and their eldest sons in like perpetual succession; Spelman calls both of these species of Esquires *armigeri natalitii*, as he denominates the sons themselves of Peers *armigeri honorarii*.

3. Esquires created by the King's letters patent or other investiture, and their eldest sons. Of this class were the *Esquires of the King*, who on their creation had put about their necks a collar of S. S. and a pair of Silver Spurs was bestowed on them; they were wont to bear before the Prince in war a shield or lance. In Camden's time there were four *Esquires of the King's Body*, to attend on his Majesty's person; such officers are now out of fashion.

4. Esquires by virtue of their offices and others who bear any office of trust under the Crown, if styled Esquires in their commissions and appointments.

visitation from my friend, to pass an autumn month with him in the country. He promised that I should meet some early and valued friends, and, above all, be as welcome as a brother. I knew the latter well enough; and did not hesitate to accept the offer; besides, I had heard of his marriage, and had made notes of his Introduction to town up to the period of his incarceration in the King's Bench; it was indispensable, therefore, that I should obtain an account of his subsequent life, in order to complete this volume in a satisfactory and author-like manner.

My friend received me with the warmest welcome, at a small mansion situated about a mile from the Castle

Barristers, it seems, by ancient usage, are accounted Esquires; and not many years ago, the Court of Common Pleas refused to hear an affidavit read, because a Barrister named in it was not called Esquire. From the best authorities, however, it appears that this title was originally attained by usurpation; and in the same manner according to the rules of precedence, Barristers rank before all Esquires. I remember that my good old father, some years since expressed himself with considerable warmth on this important matter. I had just returned to the country from keeping my first term at Lincoln's Inn, when I received a letter from a legal friend, who dubbed me an Esquire. "Here, boy, (said the old gentleman, as he handed me the packet) Esquire indeed! How absurd it is to give you such a title. Why, I should have no right to it but that I am in the Peace; even a Barrister, Sir, is not a recognised Esquire; he is not acknowledged as such in either of the Statutes, or by any letters patent; and it is ridiculous to think of his taking precedence of the gentry of the land." I felt no disposition just then to moot the point with my good father, and I agreed with him that the proper place of the Barrister was *after* not *before* all other Esquires.

of Sir William Wilton; and in a little time after my arrival, introduced me to his wife, with the following description: "This, my dear Lucy, is an early and a good friend of mine. The only thing I can say against him is, that he is a bachelor, a stain upon his character which I hope he will soon remove."

I was thinking about this "stain upon my character," when a party joined us from the Castle, in whom I recognised my friend Northley and Emily Dibble (*that was*), and the Banker's son and Mary Ann Firman (*that was*). I did not require to be told that these parties were married—of course I could see the truth in a moment, by their manner to each other, as well as by the pitying glance that they gave towards a bachelor, and which as much as said "Poor fellow! will nobody have him?"

What an alteration, thought I, in two or three years—every body married, but myself; it is high time for me to look at the matter seriously; and as if to help me in my meditations I walked M'Neil's eldest sister, the young lady who accompanied me on my first visit to Killarney.

"Now, there's a wife for *you*, Wilson, (observed Northley) we may as well *all* be married, I think."

This was one of those impudent things that married persons imagine they are privileged to say; and which they utter without any regard to time or place. But I must confess that had a priest religiously put the question to me just then, I should hardly have been unkind enough to say No. Miss M'Neil looked as young as

ever ; better, I think, than when I saw her at Killarney ; and not the less pleasing, to my taste, by reason of a little confusion at the remark of Northley.

The morning after my arrival at my friend's, he took me into the grounds adjoining his house.

" You have a beautiful place," said I, " and a fine wife, Bob ; surely, you are a fortunate fellow."

" I am so, indeed," he replied ; " and now, if you are disposed to listen, I will give you a sketch of the last four years of my life."

" I shall be most happy to hear your history."

" Well, then, when you left England I was in the Bench."

" Yes, in the Bench, Bob, and how the D—l did you get out of it ?"

" Patience, my friend, and you shall have it. My state of mind was wretched in the extreme, when I thought (which I did continually) of my ruined situation. I felt that my hopes were blighted—that all chance of future honour and prosperity was gone ; and above all, I lamented, in very bitterness of soul, that my own guilty folly had lost me that for which alone I cared to live,—the affection of Lucy Wilton ; for I could not hope that she would still think kindly of me.

" The Circuit, too, had commenced, and no human chance appeared of my being at the Assizes for the county of ———. However, I so far attended to the Vicar's advice as to study his case, with all the application that my feelings would permit ; and made notes of a great number of the authorities in Gwillim's four

volumes of tithe reports. I was walking one evening in that part of Great Surrey-street, Blackfriars Road, which is within the Rules of the Bench, when I observed old Dibble the banker approaching me; our eyes met, and it was therefore too late for me to avoid him.

“ ‘ Why, why, Mr. M’Neil, (said the old gentleman, in a hurried tone)—I thought you were in the country—on circuit, Sir; I wanted you to dine with us the other day—but I believe your excuse was, that you should leave town on the morrow—It wasn’t kind, my good Sir, not to come—we had some friends of yours, and some excellent old port, you know. And’—

“ Here the old gentleman made a sudden pause; his countenance changed; and as he surveyed me more earnestly than before, I perceived too plainly that the truth of the case had flashed across his mind. After a hem or two, he continued—

“ ‘ Why d—n it, Sir, surely nothing has happened?’

“ ‘ Nothing particular, Sir, (I replied); but you will excuse me just now, as I—I—’

“ ‘ No, Mr. M’Neil, I will *not* excuse you; I must know something about your concerns. I see plainly enough that you are in the Bench; you served *me*, Sir, once, in a very important matter, and perhaps I may be able to do *you* a kindness. I’ll walk with you to your apartment.’

“ I could not decline this offer; for the old gentleman had taken my arm, and almost unconsciously I led him to my room. As you may well imagine, I was silent; but the banker soon opened a conversation.

“ ‘ I regret sincerely (said he gravely) to find you in this place ; but I trust your difficulties are not great, and that a method may be found for setting you fair with the world again. This is not a time, my young friend, to be lecturing you, and giving sage advice ; just take your pen, and set down the full amount of your debts—don’t blink the thing at all ; let us have an honest account of them.’

“ ‘ Really, Sir, (I replied) you must excuse my doing so—I fear my embarrassments are much greater than you imagine, and I do not deserve your friendship.’

“ ‘ But indeed you do ; and I insist upon knowing what, and to whom, you are indebted.’

“ This sort of conversation continued between us for some time ; and at last I was prevailed on to draw out a statement of my debts. The only thing satisfactory about it was, that I made a full and fair account ; I had not done so before, and I was literally alarmed when I found the total rise above fifteen hundred pounds ; I doubted my knowledge of addition, and cast up the sums a second time ; but the total was still more than fifteen hundred pounds. The banker, seeing I had finished my paper, gravely wiped his spectacles, and looked over the account. I saw the shades deepening on his countenance, as he patiently passed from one item to another.

“ ‘ A most imprudent piece of business, Sir !—fifteen hundred pounds, in about two years ! But I see you’ve been playing, Sir, and raising money on bills, Sir ; I only wonder you are not more in debt.’ The old gen-

leman then suddenly changed his tone, and proceeded, mildly, 'I really beg your pardon, my young friend, I spoke rather sharply; and this—this is not the time and place for doing so. I'll put this paper in my pocket, and think over the matter; you shall see me again in a few days.' He then shook me kindly by the hand; and said on leaving my room, 'I rely upon it, Sir, that you have withheld nothing.'

" 'Nothing, that I remember.'

" 'Very well,—good day—good night—I shall see you again in a few days.'

" In a few days, the banker did see me again. It was evening when he called at my apartments; and in the expectation of seeing him, I had remained at home the whole day. It was too much to expect that he would enter deeply into my affairs; but I thought it likely that he might so far arrange with my detaining creditor as to get me breathing time for going the circuit. You may judge of my surprise, therefore, when the old gentleman formally announced that my creditors were all satisfied, and that I was to give him my security for the sum of fifteen hundred pounds.

" 'With all my heart,' said I, forgetting every thing at the moment but the fact of my being free; but when I reflected for an instant, I poured out a volume of unconnected thanks to my good friend, which he declined accepting, giving them back to me with this observation—'Never trouble yourself about *who* has been your friend in this matter—it is enough for *me* to say that I have done no more than negotiate the settlement. You

have now your discharge, my young friend, and I hope this short residence in the Bench will make you more cautious and steady for the future.'

"I bowed my head (which was heavy with good intentions for the future) with all humility to the banker, and lost no time in preparing for circuit. I had the satisfaction of finding my chambers undisturbed; the execution had been fortunately discharged just in time to prevent their being despoiled by the ruffian hands of the bailiff and the broker."

'But you may as well tell me at once,' said I, 'who advanced the money for your discharge; you know the truth by this time, I dare say; and 'it will be too much in the novel style to keep back the fact till after your appearance at the tithe cause.'

"Well, as I need not study *effect*," continued Bob, "I'll even clear up the mystery as we go along. It was but a few months ago, that I made the discovery. Lucy had given me a writing desk of hers for the temporary custody of some professional papers which I had received during my residence in the country: in a private recess of this desk, I one day found the identical bond which I had given to the banker in the Rules of the King's Bench. This circumstance excited my suspicions, and I applied to Mrs. Bristley for an explanation of the affair: she gave it me, upon the express promise that at present I would not allude to the bond in the presence of Lucy."

"It seems that my residence near the Obelisk was soon communicated to her and to the Vicar, by some

good-natured, well-intentioned friend, who did not chuse to put his name to the epistle, or I might ere this have thanked him for his kindness. A council was instantly held at the Vicarage, and the Doctor lost no time in ascertaining the truth of the story; to be brief, Miss Wilton insisted on handing the Doctor a sum sufficient for my discharge, which was forthwith confided to the care and disposition of old Dibble, who liberated me accordingly. Ah, my good friend, if there be one thing in this world more liberal and disinterested than another it is the love of woman!"

'I dare say you think so, Bob; indeed, you speak from experience,—but go on.'

"The next thing of any interest was my professional *debut*. I joined the Circuit on the opening of the second commission, with feelings far from sanguine, and hopes mightily subdued. When the bar was at some distance, I often indulged in dreams of future success, and forgot the amount of learning, talent, and interest that would be opposed to me; but when, in right earnest, I adjusted my yet unruffled wig, and took my station in court, the youngest and least known of more than half a hundred practitioners, I saw the picture to be but a gloomy one, and felt how necessary it was to be stored with a large supply of patient perseverance before a single cheering hope could be reasonably entertained. A new man on circuit is not the most welcome of visitors, and excites considerable observation from most of his brethren; the 'Who is he?' 'What is he?' and 'Is he clever?' are questions anxiously put to each other

by the junior barristers ; the seniors hardly condescend to notice him, except when, by chance he has occasion to rise, and then their glance is rather one of idle and malicious curiosity to observe his features as he breaks down (which they confidently expect him to do), than of any thing kinder or more liberal. Some half dozen two or three years' standing men soon imagine that he is likely to cut into their connection, and they of course cut him ; and when he gets his first brief, at least a dozen blockheads, who have no business in court except to devour sandwiches, look at him with an air of spiteful superciliousness. It is a lucky circumstance indeed if he meets with one or two gentlemen who sympathize with his situation, and give him their friendly countenance. In the midst of plenty of coldness and reserve, I was fortunate enough to be accosted by a gentleman with whom I one day hunted at Sir William's, and he kindly dissipated the feelings which the novelty of my situation had occasioned.

“ At the first assizes, I made one guinea ; for which I defended a country lad who was charged with stealing a whip. I believe the prisoner was innocent, and the jury thought so too ; thus far all went well. But nothing beyond four or five guinea-briefs occurred till we arrived at ———, and here the tithe cause stood for trial.

“ There were circumstances about these assizes which made me rather anxious to put on my wig carefully before I entered court. The Doctor would certainly be there, and as Sir William felt somewhat interested in

the question, he might also be present. Besides, the gallery would be lined with most of the ladies of the neighbourhood, to many of whom I was slightly known; but above all other considerations, I did not forget that there existed a chance of Lucy's accompanying Mrs. Bristley to the scene of my exertions.

"The night before the trial of the cause, I attended a consultation at Mr. Sergeant P——'s rooms. You may imagine with what feelings of trepidation I stepped into the presence of this bustling and successful brother of the coif. I was literally awed into silence. The Vicar and his attorney soon commenced the work of enlightenment, and after a quarter of an hour's conversation, I ventured to think that the learned counsel, although he had received his brief nearly two months before, knew little of its contents. The truth was, that the large share of practice which fell to his lot, frequently prevented his paying sufficient attention to a case until it came into court. He therefore put a variety of questions, which the Doctor left me to answer; and thus at length I took courage, and launched boldly into the case. The Sergeant was far from uncourteous; on the contrary, he expressed himself much obliged to me for the information I had afforded him, and added, (in the hearing of an attorney too) 'You have well considered the case, Sir, I shall derive much benefit from your assistance.'

"This compliment from my leader inspired me with additional confidence, and I anxiously looked forward for the morrow. You may imagine that I slept little

that night ; my head was full of the church, and tithes of all descriptions ; but I must confess that the examination of the question gave me a greater opinion of the political ingenuity of the clergy in obtaining and preserving their rights, than of the justness (abstractedly considered) of so large an appropriation of wealth to the support of the church. I could not refrain from contrasting the ecclesiastical establishment of Scotland with that of my own country, and drawing a conclusion strongly in favour of the former. In Scotland *personal* tithes (that is, tithes of the profits of manual occupations, trades, fisheries, and the like) have never been acknowledged ; and the system of *predial* tithes (which mean tithes of the fruits of the earth, as of corn, hay, hops, hemp, and of all kind of fruits, seeds, and herbs) is so regulated, that the proprietor of the land can purchase his tithes in some cases at nine, and in others, at six years' purchase, except such tithes as belong to the crown, or to colleges or schools ; another great benefit to religion is, that in Scotland all the clergy are stipendiary ; and therefore oppression and litigation between the minister and his people, are totally unknown.

" The Vicar took his breakfast with me on the morning of the trial, and as may be supposed we talked of nothing but tithes and the forthcoming cause.

" It was while the Doctor paused over his second cup of coffee, that I muttered something about the evils of the system, and alluded to the common error, that the existence of tithes is to be traced as far back as we can follow our history.

“ ‘ Why certainly, (observed the Vicar), I do not mean to say that the tithe system was known in the earliest ages of the Christian church, although an able writer observes that possibly they were contemporary with the planting of Christianity amongst the Saxons, by Augustine the Monk, about the end of the sixth century.’

“ ‘ I think, Sir, (said I) Bishop Barlow (in his “ *Remains* ”) tells us that during the first five centuries after the establishment of the Christian church, the churches and priesthood were maintained; by free gifts and oblations only. And it does not appear, from any documents, that tithes were introduced into England till about the year 786. This is Selden’s opinion, and the first mention made of them in any English written law appears to be in a constitutional decree, made in a synod, held A. D. 786, wherein the payment of tithes in general is strongly enjoined ; and this canon did not at first bind the laity.’

“ ‘ But (observed the Doctor) the decree was afterwards confirmed by two kingdoms of the Heptarchy, in their parliamentary conventions of estates, respectively consisting of the Kings of Mercia and Northumberland, the bishops, dukes, senators, and people.’

“ ‘ That is very true, Sir ; and it is somewhat curious to trace the motive of the former monarch (Offa) in thus giving the tithes of his kingdom to the church, which, in after ages, grew so rich from the crimes and superstition of princes ; for had he not, in the previous year, basely murdered Ethelbert, the King of the East

the learned counsel who had last addressed him. Sir William certainly heard the compliment of the Judge ; but I was anxious to know if it reached the gallery ; I concluded that it did, as the court was small, and a deep silence prevailed at the moment it was uttered.

“ But I shall tire you, Wilson, with this tithe affair ?

‘ Rather prosing, in good truth, Bob ; but go on.’

“ Well, the cause continued nearly all the day, and of course I had several opportunities of addressing the Bench ; for after an hour or two, my leader grew tired, and I had plenty to do and say ; good luck (and right) were assuredly on our side, and in the evening the jury gave a verdict for the Doctor. The old gentleman instantly shook me heartily by the hand, and would have congratulated me on my success ; I observed a tear of exultation on my behalf standing in his affectionate eye. And there were other greetings and good wishes for me, which I valued equally as much. Talk of triumphs, no conqueror ever felt more than I did when Lucy whispered me—‘ You spoke so well !’ and of course I imagined myself a Cicero, and walked about my room,* saying, ‘ *Cedant arma togæ, concedat laurea lingua,*’ till I was waited upon by two or three attorneys, who practically proved how much we owe to opportunity by giving me business.

* The reason of this flourish of my hero’s will more plainly appear by my informing the reader, that young Reston had, somewhere about this time, entered the army.

the march of improvement, and the consequent power of public opinion, will, though almost unperceived, work their full and sure effect upon the institutions of the country.'

" ' I am certainly, Sir, not an advocate for any measures that would endanger our establishment; but I think it is impossible not to see, that when a nation has increased in energy and wealth, in so great a degree as this country has done, an appropriation of a full tenth of its income to the church, is a much larger appropriation, bearing in mind the altered nature of circumstances, than even our superstitious forefathers would have made. At the same time, I admit that the clergy rightly found their title to tithes on the law of the land.'

" ' To be sure they do. As to the notion of a divine right to their property, that is completely exploded: though I apprehend such a right to tithes commenced, and ceased, with the Jewish Theocracy. Blackstone, however, very fairly says, that an honourable and competent maintenance for the ministers of the gospel, is undoubtedly *jure divino*; whatever the particular mode of that maintenance may be.'

" ' And I agree with him. We may observe that all municipal laws have provided a liberal and decent maintenance for their national priests or clergy; but the question with us is, whether our establishment does not take too large a portion from the national income; and whether that portion is not most unfairly distributed amongst the ministers of the gospel. And I may re-

mark here, that when Charlemagne established the payment of tithes in France (A.D. 778,) he made a division of them into four parts—one to maintain the edifice of the church; the second to support the poor; the third the bishop; and the fourth the parochial clergy.*

* Les réglemens faits sous le roi Pépin avoient plutôt donné à l'église l'espérance d'un soulagement qu'un soulagement effectif : et comme Charles Martel trouva tout le patrimoine public entre les mains des ecclésiastiques, Charlemagne trouva les biens des ecclésiastiques entre les mains des gens de guerre. On ne pouvoit faire restituer à ceux-ci ce qu'on leur avoit donné; et les circonstances où l'on étoit pour lors rendoient la chose encore plus impraticable qu'elle n'étoit de sa nature. D'un autre côté, le christianisme, ne devoit pas périr, faute de ministres, de temples et d'instructions. Cela fit que Charlemagne établit des dîmes, nouveau genre de bien qui eut cet avantage pour le clergé, qu' étant singulièrement donné à l'église, il fut plus aisé dans la suite d'en reconnoître les usurpations. * * * J'ai dit que les reglemens faits sous le roi Pépin avoient soumis au paiement des dîmes et aux réparations des églises, ceux qui possédoient en fiefs les biens ecclésiastiques. C' étoit beaucoup d'obliger par une loi, dont on ne pouvoit disputer la justice, les principaux de la nation à donner l'exemple. Charlemagne fit plus : et on voit, par le capitulaire de *Willis*, qu'il obligea ses propres fonds au paiement des dîmes : c'étoit encore un grand exemple. Mais les bas peuple n'est guerre capable d'abandonner ses intérêts par des exemples. Le synode de Francfort lui présenta un motif plus pressant pour payer les dîmes. On y fit un capitulaire, dans lequel il est dit que, dans la dernière famine, on avoit trouvé les épis de bled vuides; qu'ils avoient été dévorés par les demons, et qu'on avoit entendu leurs voix qui reprochoient de n'avoir pas payé la dîme; et, en conséquence, il fut ordonné à tous ceux qui tenoient les biens ecclésiastiques, de payer la dîme; et, en conséquence

“ ‘ Well, my young friend, I certainly think the English church is quite rich enough ; but you must go to court, and prevent its being robbed in good earnest : we’ll talk over the general question another day.’ ”

“ The first thing that struck me, on taking my seat in court, was the presence of Lord Reston and Sir William Wilton, on the Bench ; the Vicar was behind me, feeling I believe almost as anxious about my success as about that of his cause, and I observed the sidelong glance of his benevolent eye, when I rose to open the pleadings with, ‘ May it please your Lordship—Gentlemen of the Jury.’ Short as the address was, my good friend, I felt more agitated during its delivery than I had ever been before ; and I trust that I shall not soon be so powerfully affected again. There sat the venerable and learned Judge on the bench, and around me a crowd of Advocates, many of whom were skilful and talented ; and many more ignorant and illiberal. The gallery was filled with earnest spectators ; and as I looked along it, on resuming my seat, I caught the friendly eyes of Lucy and Mrs. Bristley.

“ The long speech of the learned Sergeant in stating the case to the jury left me full time for prepa-

encore, on l'ordonna à tous. * * * Les loix de Charlemagne sur l'établissement des dîmes, étoient l'ouvrage de la nécessité ; la religion seule y eut part, et la superstition n'en eut aucune. La fameuse division qu'il fit des dîmes en quatre parties, pour la fabrique des églises, pour les pauvres, pour l'évêque, pour les clercs, prouve bien qu'il vouloit donner à l'église cet état fixe et permanent qu'elle avoit perdu.—*Montesq. de l'Esprit des Loix*, b. 31, c. 13.

ration, and when it devolved upon me to examine the first witness, (who, by the way, was my old friend Michael Thomas, the parish clerk),—I rose with considerable confidence, and (as I thought) put my questions well enough; at any rate, I was gratified at receiving but few suggestions either from my leader or the bench. To be sure, Michael was a most willing witness, well versed in the history of the parish, and withal (except that he really believed in the story of the “departure” of the old vicar) a clear-headed man; the only difficulty was, to prevent his talking too fast, and quoting the notes and learning of his predecessors, instead of detailing the results of his own experience. At one part of Michael’s evidence, however, there was some danger of getting into an awkward dilemma.

“ ‘ You are clerk of the parish of ———, I believe?’

“ ‘ Yes, Sir; I succeeded my father, in that office. My grandfather was also’—

“ ‘ Never mind your grandfather, Mr. Thomas—let him rest.’

“ ‘ The last vicar I think, died in the year 1746, did he not?’

“ Michael looked me full in the face, and paused.

“ ‘ Do you remember, Sir, (asked the Judge) when the last vicar (Mr. Mug) died?’

“ Michael turned to his Lordship, but answered not.

“ I then put the question (which in truth was an immaterial one) a second time, and my old friend, having recovered himself, answered—‘ Yes, Sir, the last vicar *departed* this world in the year 1746.’

“ This answer would have been well enough, but the Judge observed, somewhat irritably—

“ ‘ Well, man, then he *died* in 1746 ?’

“ ‘ No, my Lord, (rejoined Michael), he did *not* die, please your Lordship.’

“ ‘ What can the man mean ?’ exclaimed the Judge, looking at Lord Reston, who made a private communication to his Lordship, on which the latter observed— ‘ We’ll pass on, Mr. M’Neil ; I remember to have read a ballad somewhere about the death of the Reverend Gentleman in question.’

“ During the progress of the cause several points arose, which I had not even remotely anticipated ; and then it was that I felt the benefit of being somewhat prepared. When the first point was started, I suggested one or two things to my leader ; and he closed his observations by saying, that with his Lordship’s permission, his Learned Friend would offer some additional arguments in support of the view which he had taken. The Judge nodded assent, and I was compelled to rise. For the first few sentences I hardly knew what I was saying—my legs trembled merrily ; but I twisted one of them round the leg of the table, and kept the other steady by pressing it against my seat ; by these means I was enabled to stand up somewhat respectably, and look his Lordship in the face. I certainly owed much to the kindness and attention with which he listened to my remarks ; and you may judge of my feelings when he observed, on my sitting down, that the point had been extremely well argued, and by none better than—

the learned counsel who had last addressed him. Sir William certainly heard the compliment of the Judge ; but I was anxious to know if it reached the gallery ; I concluded that it did, as the court was small, and a deep silence prevailed at the moment it was uttered.

“ But I shall tire you, Wilson, with this tithe affair ?

‘ Rather prosing, in good truth, Bob ; but go on.’

“ Well, the cause continued nearly all the day, and of course I had several opportunities of addressing the Bench ; for after an hour or two, my leader grew tired, and I had plenty to do and say ; good luck (and right) were assuredly on our side, and in the evening the jury gave a verdict for the Doctor. The old gentleman instantly shook me heartily by the hand, and would have congratulated me on my success ; I observed a tear of exultation on my behalf standing in his affectionate eye. And there were other greetings and good wishes for me, which I valued equally as much. Talk of triumphs, no conqueror ever felt more than I did when Lucy whispered me—‘ You spoke so well !’ and of course I imagined myself a Cicero, and walked about my room,* saying, ‘ *Cedant arma togæ, concedat laurea lingua*,’ till I was waited upon by two or three attorneys, who practically proved how much we owe to opportunity by giving me business.

* The reason of this flourish of my hero’s will more plainly appear by my informing the reader, that young Reston had, somewhere about this time, entered the army.

" During the remainder of the vacation I reposed upon my laurels very pleasantly at the vicarage ; I had the gratification of finding that my fame had preceded me, and that people who were not so respectful as I could have wished on previous occasions considered it quite as well to treat with politeness an individual who *might* one day or other get a silk gown, and fill an honourable station at the Bar. But what pleased me more than all the rest, was the somewhat altered manner of the Baronet ; the tithe cause had evidently made an impression upon him, for he received me with courtesy, and gave me two invitations to his table. Indeed, everything was going on extremely well, when the election for the Borough of Pittsburgh caused a suspension of Sir William's good feeling towards me.

" The Doctor, as you know, is rather favourable to the Whig party, and though he takes no very decided part in politics, there is always a coolness between him and Lord Reston and the Baronet as regularly as members are to be elected for Pittsburgh or the county. Sir William and his Lordship had hitherto clubbed their Tory interest, and successfully resisted the inroads of the Whig Lord Linton. But in this instance they had neglected to provide against the machinations of the enemy with sufficient caution, and were only awakened from their dream of confidence by the unlooked for starting of a candidate on the Linton interest.

" Mr. Reston was the Tory nominee, and wine and colours were in abundance, when I arrived at Pittsburgh

in company with the Whig candidate Colonel Swanston. The Doctor's well known attachment to the party had enabled him to recommend a counsel to them, and a hundred-and-fifty guinea retainer moved me from the Temple in a chaise and four. I confess that this fee was particularly grateful to me, and not the less so, because I should be opposed tooth and nail to my old rival, whose mortification I pictured to myself in strong colours, in the event of his defeat; but this, it seemed, was a consummation that could hardly be anticipated, as the Colonel assured me he had little hope of success on that occasion.

"The town was boisterously alive when the chaise drove up to the Linton Arms. Crowds of men, women and children pressed round the inn, and 'Swanston for ever!' rung in our ears as we alighted. 'Which is the Colonel?' 'Hurra!' — 'That's the Counsellor!' — 'Where's his wig?' 'Linton for ever!' 'Down with the Blues!' and other such expressions of political zeal were interspersed with a profusion of hiccups and oaths from the most choice and far-gone of the assemblage. "Mine Host" of *The Linton*, a sleek, jolly old boy, in whose face one could read glorious anticipations of the coming harvest, conducted us straight to the Committee Room, where sat some twenty sapient fellows speculating, over their bottle, on the chances of success.

"The Colonel bowed. 'This is our noble candidate,' exclaimed Mine Host—'and this, (he added) is the

Counsellor.' In a moment we were surrounded, and those who could not get near enough to shake hands with the would-be member contented themselves with pulling mine, and this they did with a most painful cordiality.

"The Colonel had only two days for canvassing before the nomination; but that was of little consequence, as the Whig electors were well known, and would come to the poll as a matter of course. On the morning after our arrival the Colonel duly paid his respects to the freemen in the Linton interest, chatted with their wives, smirked with their daughters, and patted on the head many a thick-skulled boy, whom he praised for looking sharp and clever. In short, as I learnt from good authority, the gallant candidate procured the character of being one of the 'most handsomest and affablest' of gentlemen. In the meantime, as I deemed it imprudent to travel much beyond my instructions, particularly as Sir William would be busy in the borough, I excused myself from being a member of the canvassing party, and strolled out of the town for a morning's walk. I certainly took the road that led to my good friend the Doctor's, and this brought me in contact with Michael Thomas: on seeing me, the old clerk methodically opened his pocket book, and handed me a letter, observing at the same moment that Sir William would arrive at Pittsburgh early on the morrow. The packet was from Lucy, and (amongst other things) it informed me that the Baronet had heard

of my arrival in the country as counsel for the colonel ; at first, it seems, he manifested great displeasure ; but after a little consideration observed, ‘ Well, *we* ought to have retained him ; it’s all in the way of his profession, I dare say.’

“ When I had read the letter, Michael spoke of the forth-coming election, and gave me a history of several previous contests ; in one of which, he said, the Whigs got in by a clever trick. ‘ You must know, Sir, (added the clerk, as we walked together towards the borough) that no man can vote for Pittsburgh who hasn’t paid his rates within a certain time before the election day ; and when Sir William’s men came up to poll, the counsellor on the other side cross-examined ’em about their receipts, and wouldn’t let ’em vote, and so the Baronet lost the day.’

“ This was a hint which might turn out to my advantage ; and accordingly I lost no time in examining into the goodness of our votes. In this I was mainly assisted by Mr. Alfred Wriggle, the country attorney, and agent for the Whig lord. This gentleman was just the person which one would expect to see on such an occasion ; busy, bustling, dogmatical, and impudent, he felt the full importance of his character, and moved about the town with the consciousness of being the Whig agent ; and I am sure if you were to ask him what portion of his life he would choose to live over again, he would flip his fingers triumphantly, and exclaim, ‘ That time when I wore the Whig colours

in my hat, and was electioneering agent to his Lordship !

“ On the morning of nomination, we were all at our posts ; Wriggle, with an air of pompous cunning, standing by my side, ready to afford the necessary information. After the candidates had been proposed, young Reston put out his hand, and cried, ‘ Gentlemen ;’ there were instantly a shout and groan from the two parties, and I could only catch the end of his speech— ‘ I am a true friend to our glorious constitution as by law established.’

“ The Colonel followed. His eloquence was rather in his sword than in his tongue ; and he uttered a few disjointed sentences amidst loud cheering from the multitude ; but when silence was obtained, he turned to me for assistance : I therefore prompted him, and he proceeded—‘ Gentlemen, I am happy in the opportunity of meeting you to-day ; and if you do me the honour of electing me to represent your ancient and independent borough, [Wriggle here took off his hat] you may rely upon my using my best endeavours to restore the constitution as it was established by our forefathers in 1688, to promote a reform, and to bring about a full and fair representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament.’ (Cheering, of course.)

“ But to make short work of this election. I took care to bring up on the first day all those Whig voters who had not paid their rates in proper time ; and when the poll commenced on the morrow, I strictly examined

the qualifications of our opponents. The election had taken place somewhat suddenly, and many of the Tory freemen were successfully objected to, so that on the close of the poll the Colonel was declared duly elected by a majority of seven. I need not point out to you the noisy triumph of the Whigs, or the deep mortification of their opponents. The Doctor rejoiced at the issue of the contest, and the Baronet neglected to give me an invitation during a whole week that I spent at the Vicarage.

“However, my good friend, as I perceive you are anxious to join the ladies, I will make a jump to the end of my story; indeed as you see the details around you, in my wife and children, it is the less necessary that I should particularly narrate them. Suffice it to say, that in good season the Baronet forgot the part I played at the Election, and soon became as friendly to me as he had before been averse. With him, to be sure, the step from dislike to the opposite feeling is a short one; and once brought to think kindly of me, it only required him to subdue his desire of aggrandizing his daughter, and she was mine. This conquest he achieved, and I am the happiest fellow in the world.”

‘But you franked my letter, Bob?’

“Oh, I had forgotten that at the election last year, Sir William started me for Pittsburgh, and I have now the honour of sitting, with my friend the Colonel, for that loyal and independent borough.”

* * * * *

This was my friend's story; and I can add nothing to it, except by hearing testimony to the noble use which he makes of his good fortune. I have already been at his mansion upwards of six weeks, and have not yet heard when his sister leaves it for Killarney. That however, can be a matter of no interest to me; but I may as well inquire about it.

THE END.

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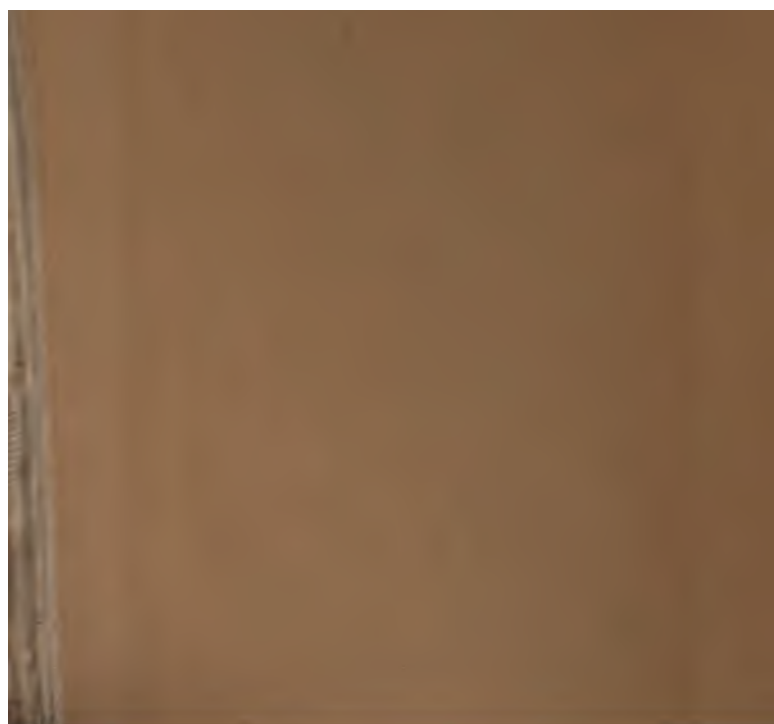
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